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BY  
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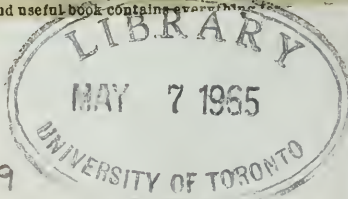
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# THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS—BY HUGH KELLY.



Capt. S.—“AND HERE I TAKE HER FROM YOU,” &c.—Act v, scene 5.

## Persons Represented.

GENERAL SAVAGE.  
CAPTAIN SAVAGE.  
BELVILLE.

TORRINGTON.  
LEESON.  
CONNOLLY.

GHASTLY.  
SPRUCE.  
LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

MRS. BELVILLE.  
MRS. TEMPEST.  
MISS WALSHINGHAM.

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I.—An Apartment at Belville's.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE, and MISS WALSHINGHAM.

Cap. S. Ha, ha, ha! Well, Miss Walsingham, his fury is going. What a noble peal she has rung in Belville's ears!

Miss W. Did she see you, Captain Savage?

Cap. S. No, I took care of that; for though he is not married to my father, she has ten times the influence of a wife, and might injure

me not a little with him, if I didn't support her side of the question.

Miss W. It was a pleasant conceit of Mr. Belville, to insinuate that the poor woman was disordered in her senses.

Cap. S. And did you observe how the termagant's violence of temper supported the probability of the charge?

Miss W. Yes; she became almost frantic in reality, when she found herself treated like a mad woman.

Cap. S. Belville's affected surprise, too, was admirable.

Miss W. Yes; the hypocritical composure of his countenance, and his counterfeit pity for the poor woman, were intolerable.

Cap. S. While that amiable creature, his wife, implicitly believed every syllable he said.

Miss W. And felt nothing but pity for the accusation. But, pray, is it really under a pretence of getting the girl upon the stage, that Belville has taken away Mrs. Tempest's niece from the people she boarded with?

Cap. S. It is. Belville, ever on the look-out for fresh objects, met her in those primitive regions of purity, the green boxes; where, discovering that she was passionately desirous of becoming an actress, he improved his acquaintance with her, in the fictitious character of an Irish manager, and she eloped last night, to be, as she imagines, the heroine of a Dublin theatre.

Miss W. So, then, as he has kept his real name artfully concealed, Mrs. Tempest can, at most, but suspect him of Miss Leeson's seduction.

Cap. S. Of no more; and this only from the description of the people who saw him in company with her at the play; but I wish the affair may not have a serious conclusion, for she has a brother, a very spirited young fellow, who is a counsellor in the Temple, and who will certainly call Belville to an account the moment he hears of it.

Miss W. And what will become of the poor creature, after he has deserted her?

Cap. S. You know that Belville is generous to profusion, and has a thousand good qualities to counterbalance this single fault of gallantry, which contaminates his character.

Miss W. You men, you men! You are such wretches, that there's no having a moment's satisfaction with you; and, what's still more provoking, there's no having a moment's satisfaction without you.

Cap. S. Nay, don't think us all alike.

Miss W. I'll endeavour to deceive myself; for it is but a poor argument of your sincerity, to be the confidant of another's falsehood.

Cap. S. Nay, no more of this, my love; no people live happier than Belville and his wife; nor is there a man in England, notwithstanding all his levity, who considers his wife with a warmer degree of affection. If you have a friendship therefore, for her, let her continue in an error, so necessary to her repose, and give no hint whatever of his gallantries to anybody.

Miss W. If I had no pleasure in obliging you, I have too much regard for Mrs. Belville, not to follow your advice; but you need not enjoin me so strongly on the subject, when you know I can keep a secret.

Cap. S. You are all goodness; and the prudence with which you have concealed our private engagements has eternally obliged me; had you trusted the secret even to Mrs. Belville, it would not have been safe; she would have told her husband, and he is such a rattleskull, that, notwithstanding all his regard for me, he would have mentioned it in some moment of levity, and sent it in a course of circulation to my father.

Miss W. The peculiarity of your father's temper, joined to my want of fortune, made it necessary for me to keep our engagements inviolably secret; there is no merit, therefore, either in my prudence, or in my labouring assiduously to cultivate the good opinion of the general, since both were so necessary to my own

happiness. Don't despise me for this acknowledgment now.

Cap. S. Bewitching softness! But your goodness, I flatter myself, will be speedily rewarded; you are now such a favourite with him, that he is eternally talking of you; and I really fancy he means to propose you to me himself; for, last night, in a few minutes after he had declared you would make the best wife in the world, he seriously asked me if I had any aversion to matrimony?

Miss W. Why, that was a very great concession, indeed, as he seldom stoops to consult any body's inclinations.

Cap. S. So it was, I assure you; for, in the army, being used to nothing but command and obedience, he removes the discipline of the parade into his family, and no more expects his orders should be disputed in matters of a domestic nature than if they were delivered at the head of his regiment.

Miss W. And yet, Mrs. Tempest, who you say is as much a storm in her nature as her name, is disputing them eternally.

Enter MR. and MRS. BELVILLE.

Bel. Well, Miss Walsingham, haven't we had a pretty morning's visitor?

Miss W. Really, I think so; and I have been asking Captain Savage how long the lady has been disordered in her senses.

Bel. Why will they let the poor woman abroad, without somebody to take care of her?

Cap. S. Oh, she has her lucid intervals.

Miss W. I declare, I shall be as angry with you as I am with Belville.

(Aside to the Captain.)

Mrs. B. You can't think how sensibly she spoke at first.

Bel. I should have had no conception of her madness, if she had not brought so preposterous a charge against me.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Lady Rachel Mildew, madam, sends her compliments, and if you are not particularly engaged, will do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you.

Mrs. B. Our compliments, and we shall be glad to see her ladyship.

[Exit Servant.]

Bel. I wonder if Lady Rachel knows that Torrington came to town last night from Bath.

Mrs. B. I hope he has found benefit by the waters, for he is one of the best creatures existing; he's a downright parson Adams in good nature and simplicity.

Miss W. Lady Rachel will be quite happy at his return, and it would be a laughable affair, if a match could be brought about between the old maid and the old bachelor.

Cap. S. Mr. Torrington is too much taken up at Westminster Hall to think of paying his devoirs to the ladies; and too plain a speaker, I fancy, to be agreeable to Lady Rachel.

Bel. You mistake the matter widely; she is deeply smitten with him; but honest Torrington is utterly unconscious of his conquest, and modestly thinks that he has not a single attraction for any woman in the universe.

*Mrs. B.* Yet my poor aunt speaks sufficiently plain, in all conscience, to give him a different opinion of himself.

*Miss W.* Yes; and puts her charms into such repair, whenever she expects to meet him, that her cheeks look for all the world like a raspberry ice upon a ground of custard.

*Cap. S.* I thought Apollo was the only god of Lady Rachel's idolatry, and that in her passion for poetry she had taken leave of all the less elevated affections.

*Bel.* Oh! you mistake again; the poets are eternally in love, and can, by no means, be calculated to describe the imaginary passions, without being very susceptible of the real ones.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* The man, madam, from Tavistock Street, has brought home the dresses for the masquerade, and desires to know if there are any commands for him.

*Mrs. B.* Oh! bid him stay till we see the dresses.

*[Exit Servant]*

*Miss W.* They are only dominos.

*Bel.* I am glad of that; for characters are as difficult to be supported at the masquerade, as they are in real life. The last time I was at the Pantheon, a vestal virgin invited me to sup with her, and swore that her pocket had been picked by a justice of peace.

*Miss W.* Nay, that was not so bad as the Hamlet's Ghost that boxed with Henry the Eighth, and afterwards danced a hornpipe to the tune of Nancy Dawson. Ha, ha, ha! We'll follow you, Mrs. Belville.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—*Leeson's Chambers in the Temple.*

*Enter LEESON.*

*Lee.* Where is this clerk of mine? Connolly!

*Con.* (*Behind.*) Here, sir.

*Lee.* Have you copied the marriage-settlement, as I corrected it?

*Enter CONNOLLY, with pistols.*

*Con.* Ay, honey; an hour ago.

*Lee.* What, you have been trying those pistols?

*Con.* By my soul, I have been firing them this half hour, without once being able to make them go off.

*Lee.* They are plaguy dirty.

*Con.* In troth! so they are; I strove to brighten them up a little, but some misfortune attends everything I do; for the more I clean them, the dirtier they are, honey.

*Lee.* You have had some of our usual daily visitors for money, I suppose?

*Con.* You may say that; and three or four of them are now hanging about the door, that I wish handsomely hanged anywhere else, for bothering us.

*Lee.* No joking, Connolly; my present situation is a very disagreeable one.

*Con.* Faith! and so it is; but who makes it disagreeable? Your aunt Tempest would let you have as much money as you please, but you won't condescend to be acquainted with her, though people in this country can be very intimate friends, without seeing one another's faces for seven years.

*Lee.* Do you think me base enough to receive a favour from a woman who has disgraced her family, and stoops to be a kept mistress? You see, my sister is already ruined by a connexion with her.

*Con.* Ah! sir, a good guinea isn't the worse for coming through a bad hand; if it was, what would become of us lawyers? And, by my soul, many a high head in London would, at this minute, be very low, if they hadn't received favours even from much worse people than kept mistresses.

*Lee.* Others, Connolly, may prostitute their honour as they please; mine is my chief possession, and I must take particular care of it.

*Con.* Honour, to be sure, is a very fine thing, sir, but I don't see how it is to be taken care of without a little money; your honour, to my knowledge, hasn't been in your own possession these two years, and the devil a crum can you honestly swear by, till you get it out of the hands of your creditors.

*Lee.* I have given you a licence to talk, Connolly, because I know you faithful; but I haven't given you a liberty to sport with my misfortunes.

*Con.* You know I'd die to serve you, sir; but of what use is your giving me leave to spake, if you oblige me to hold my tongue? 'tis out of pure love and affection that I put you in mind of your misfortunes.

*Lee.* Well, Connolly, a few days will, in all probability, enable me to redeem my honour, and to reward your fidelity; the lovely Emily, you know, has half consented to embrace the first opportunity of flying with me to Scotland, and the paltry trifles I owe will not be missed in her fortune.

*Con.* But, dear sir, consider you are going to fight a duel this very evening; and if you should be kilt, I fancy you will find it a little difficult to run away afterwards with the lovely Emily.

*Lee.* If I fail, there will be an end to my misfortunes.

*Con.* But surely it will not be quite genteel, to go out of the world without paying your debts.

*Lee.* But how shall I stay in the world, Connolly, without punishing Belville for ruining my sister?

*Con.* Oh! the devil fly away with this honour; an ounce of common sense is worth a whole shipload of it, if we must prefer a bullet or a halter to a fine young lady and a great fortune.

*Lee.* We'll talk no more on the subject at present. Take this letter to Mr. Belville; deliver it into his own hand, be sure, and bring me an answer; make haste, for I shall not stir out till you come back.

*Con.* By my soul, I wish you may be able to stir out then, honey. Oh! but that's true—

*Lee.* What's the matter?

*Con.* Why, sir, the gentleman I last lived clerk with died lately and left me a legacy of twenty guineas.

*Lee.* What! is Mr. Stanley dead?

*Con.* 'Faith! his friends have behaved very unkindly if he is not, for they have buried him these six weeks.

*Lee.* And what then?

*Con.* Why, sir, I received my little legacy this morning; and if you'd be so good as to keep it for me, I'd be much obliged to you.

*Lee.* Connolly, I understand you, but I am already shamefully in your debt. You've had no money from me this age.

*Con.* Oh, sir! that does not signify; if you are not kilt in this d—d duel, you'll be able enough to pay me; if you are, I sha'n't want it.

*Lee.* Why so, my poor fellow?

*Con.* Because, though I am but your clerk, and though I think fighting the most foolish thing upon earth, I'm as much a gentleman as yourself, and have as much right to commit a murder in the way of duelling.

*Lee.* And what then? You have no quarrel with Mr. Belville?

*Con.* I shall have a d—d quarrel with him though if you are kilt; your death shall be revenged, depend upon it, so let that content you.

*Lee.* My dear Connolly, I hope I sha'n't want such a proof of your affection. How he distresses me!

(*Aside.*)

*Con.* You will want a second, I suppose, in this affair; I stood second to my own brother, in the Fifteen Acres, and though that has made me detest the very thought of duelling ever since; yet if you want a friend, I'll attend you to the field of death with a great deal of satisfaction.

*Lee.* I thank you, Connolly, but I think it extremely wrong in any man who has a quarrel to expose his friend to difficulties; we shouldn't seek for redress if we were not equal to the task of fighting our own battles; and I choose you particularly to carry my letter, because you may be supposed ignorant of the contents, and thought to be acting in the ordinary course of your business.

*Con.* Say no more about it, honey; I will be back with you presently. (*Going, returns.*) I put the twenty guineas in your pocket before you were up, sir; and I don't believe you'd look for such a thing there if I wasn't to tell you of it.

[*Exit.*]

*Lee.* This faithful, noble-hearted creature!—but let me fly from thought; the business I have to execute will not bear the test of reflection.

[*Exit.*]

*Re-enter CONNOLLY.*

*Con.* As this is a challenge, I shouldn't go without a sword; come down, little tickle-pitcher. (*Takes a sword.*) Some people may think me very conceited now; but as the dirtiest blacklegs in town can wear one without being stared at, I don't think it can suffer any disgrace by the side of an honest man.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*An Apartment at Belville's.*

*Enter MRS. BELVILLE.*

*Mrs. B.* How strangely this affair of Mrs. Templest hangs upon my spirits, though I have every

reason, from the tenderness, the politeness, and the generosity of Mr. Belville, as well as from the woman's behaviour, to believe the whole to be the result of a disturbed imagination. Yet suppose it should be actually true? Heigho! Well, suppose it should? I would endeavour, I think I would endeavour, to keep my temper; a frowning face never recovered a heart that was not to be fixed with a smiling one; but woman in general forget this grand article of the matrimonial creed entirely; the dignity of insulted virtue obliges them to play the fool whenever their Corydons play the libertine; and they must pull down the house about the traitor's ears, though they are themselves to be crushed in pieces by the ruins.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Lady Rachel Mildew, madam!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter LADY RACHEL MILDEW.*

*Lady R.* My dear, how have you done since the little eternity of my last seeing you? Mr. Torrington has come to town, I hear.

*Mrs. B.* He is, and must be greatly flattered to hear that your ladyship has made him the hero of your new comedy.

*Lady R.* Yes, I have drawn him as he is—an honest practitioner of the law, which is, I fancy, no very common character.

*Mrs. B.* And it must be a vast acquisition to the theatre.

*Lady R.* Yet the managers of both houses have refused my play, have refused it peremptorily; though I offered to make them a present of it.

*Mrs. B.* That's very surprising.

*Lady R.* They allege that the audiences are tired of crying at comedies; and insist that my "Despairing Shepherdess" is absolutely too dismal for representation.

*Mrs. B.* What, though you have introduced a lawyer in a new light.

*Lady R.* Yes, and have a boarding-school romp that slaps her mother's face, and throws a basin of scalding water at her governess.

*Mrs. B.* Why, surely, these are capital jokes.

*Lady R.* But the managers can't find them out; however, I am determined to bring it out somewhere, and I have discovered such a treasure for my boarding-school romp, as exceeds the most sanguine expectation of criticism.

*Mrs. B.* How fortunate!

*Lady R.* Going to Mrs. Le Blond, my milliner's this morning, to see some contraband silks—for you know there's a foreign minister just arrived—I heard a loud voice rehearsing *Juliet* from the dining-room; and, upon inquiry, found that it was a country girl just eloped from her friends in town, to go upon the stage with an Irish manager.

*Mrs. B.* Ten to one, the strange woman's niece who has been here this morning.

(*Aside.*)

*Lady R.* Mrs. Le Blond has some doubts about the manager, it seems, though she hasn't seen him yet, because the apartments are very expensive, and were taken by a fine gentleman out of livery.

*Mrs. B.* What am I to think of this? Pray,



Lady Rachel, as you have conversed with this young actress, I suppose you could procure me a sight of her?

Lady R. This moment if you will, I am very intimate with her already; but pray keep the matter a secret from your husband, for he is so witty, you know, upon my passion for the drama, that I shall be teased to death by him.

Mrs. B. Oh! you may be very sure that your secret is safe, for I have a most particular reason to keep it from Mr. Belville; but he is coming this way with Captain Savage. Let us, at present, avoid him.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter BELVILLE and CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Cap. S. You are a very strange man, Belville; you are for ever tremblingly solicitous about the happiness of your wife, yet for ever endangering it by your passion for variety.

Bel. Why, there is certainly a contradiction between my principles and my practice; but, if ever you marry, you'll be able to reconcile it perfectly. Possession, savage! Oh, possession is a miserable whetter of the appetite in love! and I own myself so bad a fellow, that though I wouldn't exchange Mrs. Belville's mind for any woman's person on earth, there is scarcely a woman's person on earth which is to me a stronger object of attraction.

Cap. S. Then perhaps in a little time you'll be weary of Miss Leeson?

Bel. To be sure I shall; though, to own the truth, I have not yet carried my point coarsely with the little monkey.

Cap. S. Why how the plague has she escaped a moment in your hands?

Bel. By a mere accident. She came to the lodgings, which my man Spruce prepared for her, rather unexpectedly last night, so that I happened to be engaged particularly in another quarter—you understand me?—and the d—d aunt found me so much employment all the morning, that I could only send a message by Spruce, promising to call upon her the first moment I had to spare in the course of the day.

Cap. S. And so you are previously satisfied that you shall be tired of her.

Bel. Tired of her! Why, I am at this moment in pursuit of fresh game, against the hour of satiety. Game, that you know to be exquisite! and I fancy I shall bring it down, though it is closely guarded by a deal of that pride which passes for virtue with the generality of your mighty good people.

Cap. S. Indeed! and may a body know this wonder?

Bel. You are to be trusted with anything, for you are the closest fellow I ever knew, and the rack itself would hardly make you discover one of your own secrets to anybody. What do you think of Miss Walsingham?

Cap. S. Miss Walsingham! Death and the devil!

[*Aside.*]

Bel. Miss Walsingham!

Cap. S. Why, surely she has not received your addresses with any degree of approbation?

Bel. With every degree of approbation I could expect.

Cap. S. She has?

Bel. Ay; why, this news surprises you?

Cap. S. It does, indeed!

Bel. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think what a happy dog Miss Walsingham's husband is likely to be!

Cap. S. A very happy dog, truly.

Bel. She's a delicious girl, isn't she, Savage? But she'll require a little more trouble; for a fine woman, like a fortified town, to speak in your father's language, demands a regular siege; and we must even allow her the honours of war, to magnify the greatness of our own victory.

Cap. S. Well, it amazes me how you gay fellows ever have the presumption to attack a woman of principle; Miss Walsingham has no apparent levity of any kind about her.

Bel. No; but she continued in my house after I had whispered my passion in her ear, and gave me a second opportunity of addressing her improperly; what greater encouragement could I desire?

Enter SPRUCE.

Well, Spruce, what are your commands?

Spruce. My lady is just gone out with Lady Rachel, sir.

Bel. I understand you.

Spruce. I believe you do.

[*Aside.*]

[*Exit.*]

Cap. S. What is the English of these significant looks between Spruce and you?

Bel. Only that Miss Walsingham is left alone, and that I have now an opportunity of entertaining her. You must excuse me, Savage; you must, upon my soul; but not a word of this affair to anybody; because, when I shake her off my hands, there may be fools enough to think of her, upon terms upon honourable matrimony.

[*Exit.*]

Cap. S. So, here's a discovery—a precious discovery; and while I have been racking my imagination, and sacrificing my interests to promote the happiness of this woman, she has been listening to the addresses of a married man, the husband of her friend, and the immediate friend of her intended husband! By Belville's own account, however, she has not yet proceeded to any criminal lengths; but why did she keep the affair a secret from me? or why did she continue in his house after a repeated declaration of his unwarrantable attachment? What's to be done? If I open my engagement with her to Belville, I am sure he will instantly desist; but then her honour is left in a state extremely questionable. It shall be still concealed. While it remains unknown, Belville will himself tell me everything; and doubt upon an occasion of this nature is infinitely more insupportable than the downright falsehood whom we love.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—An Apartment in General Savage's House.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

Gen. Zounds, Torrington! give me quarter, when I surrender up my sword. I own that, for

these last twenty years, I have been suffering all the inconveniences of marriage, without tasting any one of its comforts, and rejoicing in an imaginary freedom while I was really grovelling in chains.

*Tor.* In the dirtiest chains upon earth; yet you wouldn't be convinced, but laughed at all your married acquaintance as slaves; when not one of them put up with half so much from the worst wife as you were obliged to crouch under from a kept mistress.

*Gen.* 'Tis too true; but you know she sacrificed much for me; you know that she was the widow of a colonel, and refused two very advantageous matches on my account.

*Tor.* If she was the widow of a judge, and had refused a high chancellor, she was still a devil incarnate, and you were, of course, a madman to live with her.

*Gen.* You don't remember her care of me when I have been sick.

*Tor.* I recollect, however, her usage of you in health, and you may easily find a tender nurse, when you are bound over by the gout or rheumatism.

*Gen.* Well, well, I agree with you that she is a devil incarnate; but I am this day determined to part with her for ever.

*Tor.* Not you, indeed.

*Gen.* What! don't I know my own mind?

*Tor.* Not you, indeed, when she is in the question; with everybody else, your resolution is as unalterable as a determination in the House of Peers; but Mrs. Tempest is your fate, and she reverses your decrees with as little difficulty as a fraudulent debtor now-a-days procures his certificate under a commission of bankruptcy.

*Gen.* Well, if, like the Roman Fabius, I conquer by delay in the end, there will be no great reason to find fault with my generalship. The proposal of parting now comes from herself.

*Tor.* Oh! you daren't make it for the life of you.

*Gen.* You must know that this morning we had a smart cannonading on Belville's account, and she threatens, as I told you before, to quit my house if I don't challenge you for taking away her niece.

*Tor.* That fellow is the very devil among the women, and yet there isn't a man in England fonder of his wife.

*Gen.* Poh! if the young mix hadn't surrendered to him, she would have capitulated to somebody else, and I shall, at this time, be doubly obliged to him if he is anyways instrumental in getting the aunt off my hands.

*Tor.* Why, at this time?

*Gen.* Because, to show you how fixed my resolution is to be a keeper no longer, I mean to marry immediately.

*Tor.* And can't you avoid being pressed to death, like a felon who refuses to plead, without incurring a sentence of perpetual imprisonment?

*Gen.* I fancy you would, yourself, have no objection to a perpetual imprisonment in the arms of Miss Walsingham?

*Tor.* But have any reason to think that, upon examination, in a case of love, she would give a favourable reply to your interrogatories?

*Gen.* The greatest; do you think I'd hazard such an engagement without being perfectly sure

of my ground? Notwithstanding my present connexion won't suffer me to see a modest woman at my own house, she always treats me with particular attention whenever I visit at Belville's, or meet her anywhere else. If fifty young fellows are present, she directs all her assiduities to the old soldier, and my son has a thousand times told me that she professes the highest opinion of my understanding.

*Tor.* And truly you give a notable proof of your understanding, in thinking of a woman almost young enough to be your granddaughter!

*Gen.* Nothing like an experienced chief to command in any garrison.

*Tor.* Recollect the state of your present citadel.

*Gen.* Well, if I am blown up by my own mine, I shall be the only sufferer. There's another thing I want to talk of—I am going to marry my son to Miss Moreland.

*Tor.* Miss Moreland!

*Gen.* Belville's sister.

*Tor.* Oh! ay, I remember that Moreland had got a good estate to assume the name of Belville.

*Gen.* I haven't yet mentioned the matter to my son, but I settled the affair with the girl's mother yesterday, and she only waits to communicate it to Belville, who is her oracle, you know.

*Tor.* And are you sure the captain will like her?

*Gen.* I am not so unreasonable as to insist upon his liking her, I shall only insist upon his marrying her.

*Tor.* What! whether he likes her or not?

*Gen.* When I issue my orders, I expect them to be obeyed; and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

*Tor.* What a delightful thing it must be to live under a military government, where a man is not to be troubled with the exercise of his understanding.

*Gen.* Miss Moreland has thirty thousand pounds. That's a large sum of ammunition money.

*Tor.* Ay, but a marriage merely on the score of fortune, is only gilding the death-warrant sent down for the execution of a prisoner. However, as I know your obstinate attachment to what you once resolve, I sha'n't pretend to argue with you; where are the papers which you want me to consider?

*Gen.* They are in my library; file off with me to the next room and they shall be laid before you; but first I'll order the chariot; for the moment I have your opinion, I purpose to sit down regularly before Miss Walsingham. Who waits there?

*Enter a Servant.*

Is Mrs. Tempest at home?

*Ser.* Yes, sir, just come in, and just going out again.

*Gen.* Very well; order the chariot to be got ready.

*Ser.* Sir, one of the panels was broken last night at the Opera House.

*Gen.* Sir, I didn't call to have the pleasure of

your conversation, but to have obedience paid to my orders.

Tor. Go order the chariot, you blockhead!

Ser. With the broken panel, sir?

Gen. Yes, you rascal, if both panels were broken, and the back shattered to pieces.

Ser. The coachman thinks that one of the wheels is damaged, sir.

Gen. Don't attempt to reason, you dog! but execute your orders. Bring the chariot without the wheels, if you can't bring it with them.

Tor. Ay, bring it, if you reduce it to a sledge, and let your master look like a malefactor for high treason on his journey to Tyburn.

Enter MRS. TEMPEST.

Mrs. T. General Savage, is the house to be forever a scene of noise with your domineering? The chariot shan't be brought; it won't be fit for use till it is repaired, and John shall drive it this very minute to the coachmaker's.

Gen. Nay, my dear, if it isn't fit for use, that's another thing.

Tor. Here's the experienced chief that's fit to command in any garrison!

(*Aside.*)

Gen. Go order me the coach, then.

(*To Ser.*)

Mrs. T. You can't have the coach.

Gen. And why so, my love?

Mrs. T. Because I want it for myself. Robert, get a hack for your master—though, indeed, I don't see what business he has out of the house.

[*Exit with Servant.*]

Tor. When you issue your orders, you expect them to be obeyed, and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

Gen. The fury! This has steeled me against her for ever! And nothing on earth can now prevent me from drumming her out immediately.

Mrs. T. An unreasonable old fool! but I'll make him know who governs this house.

(*Without.*)

Gen. Zounds! here she comes again; she has been lying in ambuscade, I suppose, and has overheard us.

Tor. What if she has? You are steeled against her for ever.

Gen. No, she's not coming, she's going down stairs; and now, dear Torrington, you must be as silent as a sentinel on an out-post about this affair. If that virago were to hear a syllable of it, she might perhaps attack Miss Walsingham in her very camp, and defeat my whole plan of operations.

Tor. I thought you were determined to drum her out immediately.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Belville's House.*

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM, followed by BELVILLE.

Miss W. I beg, sir, that you will insult me no longer with solicitations of this nature; give me proofs of your sincerity, indeed! What proofs of sincerity can your situation admit of, if I could

be even weak enough to think of you with partiality at all?

Bel. If our affections, madam, were under the government of our reason, circumstanced as I am, this unhappy bosom wouldn't be torn by passion for Miss Walsingham. Had I been blessed with your acquaintance before I saw Mrs. Belville, my hand as well as my heart would have been humbly offered to your acceptance—fate, however, has ordered it otherwise, and it is cruel to reproach me with that situation as a crime, which ought to be pitied as my greatest misfortune.

Miss W. He's actually forcing tears into his eyes! However, I'll mortify him severely.

(*Aside.*)

Bel. But such proofs of sincerity as my situation can admit of, you shall yourself command, as my only business in existence is to adore you.

Miss W. His only business in existence to adore me.

(*Aside.*)

Bel. Prostrate at your feet, my dearest Miss Walsingham (*kneeling*), behold a heart eternally devoted to your service. You have too much good sense, madam, to be the slave of custom, and too much humanity not to pity the wretchedness you have caused. Only, therefore, say that you commiserate my sufferings, I'll ask no more, and surely that may be said, without any injury to your purity, to snatch even an enemy from distraction. Where's my handkerchief?

(*Aside.*)

Miss W. Now to answer in his own way, and to make him ridiculous to himself. (*Aside.*) If I thought—if I could think (*affecting to weep*) that these protestations were real—

Bel. How can you, madam, be so unjust to your own merit—how can you be so cruelly doubtful of my solemn asseverations? Here I again kneel, and swear eternal love.

Miss W. I don't know what to say; but there is one proof—

(*Affecting to weep.*)

Bel. Name it, my angel, this moment, and make me the happiest of mankind!

Miss W. Swear to be mine for ever.

Bel. I have sworn it a thousand times, my charmer; and I will swear it to the last moment of my life.

Miss W. Why, then—but don't look at me, I beseech you; I don't know how to speak it.

Bel. The delicious emotion—do not check the generous tide of tenderness that fills me with such ecstacy.

Miss W. You'll despise me for this weakness.

Bel. This weakness—this generosity, which will demand my everlasting gratitude.

Miss W. I am a fool; but there is a kind of fatality in this affair—I do consent to go off with you.

Bel. Eternal blessings on your condescension!

Miss W. You are irresistible, and I am ready to fly with you to any part of the world.

Bel. Fly to any part of the world, indeed! You shall fly by yourself, then. (*Aside.*) You are the most lovely—the most tender creature in the world, and thus again let me thank you. Oh!

Miss Walsingham, I cannot express how happy you've made me! But where's the necessity of our leaving England?

Miss W. I thought he wouldn't like to go abroad. (*Aside.*) That I may possess the pleasure of your company unrivalled.

Bel. I must cure her of this taste for travelling.

(*Aside.*)

Miss W. You don't answer, Mr. Belville?

Bel. Why, I was turning the consequence of your proposal in my thoughts, as going off—going off—you know.

Miss W. Why, going off—you know, is going off; and what objections can you have to going off?

Bel. Why, going off will subject you, at a certainty, to the slander of the world; whereas, by staying at home, we may not only have numberless opportunities of meeting, but, at the same time, prevent suspicion itself from ever breathing on your reputation.

Miss W. I didn't dream of your starting any difficulties, sir. Just now I was dearer to you than all the world.

Bel. And so you are, by heaven!

Miss W. Why won't you sacrifice the world, then, at once, to obtain me?

Bel. Surely, my dearest life, you must know the necessity which every man of honour is under, of keeping up his character?

Miss W. So, here's this fellow swearing to ten thousand lies, and yet talking very gravely about his honour and his character. (*Aside.*) Why, to be sure, in these days, Mr. Belville, the instances of conjugal infidelity are so very scarce, and men of fashion are so remarkable for a tender attachment to their wives, that I don't wonder at your circumspection. But do you think I can stoop to accept you by halves, or admit of any partnership in your heart?

Bel. Oh! you must do more than that if you have anything to say to me. (*Aside.*) Surely, madam, when you know my whole soul unalterably your own, you will permit me to preserve those appearances with the world which are indispensably requisite. Mrs. Belville is a most excellent woman, however it may be my fortune to be devoted to another. Her happiness, besides, constitutes a principal part of my felicity, and if I were publicly to forsake her, I should be hunted as a monster from society.

Miss W. Then, I suppose, it is by way of promoting Mrs. Belville's repose, sir, that you make love to other women; and, by way of showing the nicety of your honour, that you attempt the purity of such as your own roof, peculiarly, entitles to protection. For the honour intended to me—thus low to the ground, I thank you, Mr. Belville.

Bel. Laughed at, by all the stings of mortification!

Miss W. Good-b'ye; don't let this accident mortify your vanity too much; but take care the next time you vow everlasting love, that the object is neither tender enough to sob—sob—at your distress, nor provoking enough to make a proposal of leaving England. How greatly a little common sense can lower these fellows of extraordinary impudence.

[*Exit.*]

Bel. So, then, I am fairly taken in, and she has

been only diverting herself with me all this time; however, lady fair, I may chance to have the laugh in a little time on my side; for if you can sport in this manner about the flame, I think it must, in the run, lay hold of your wings. What shall I do in this affair? She sees the matter in its true light, and there's no good to be expected from thumping of bosoms, or squeezing white handkerchiefs. No; they won't do with women of sense, and in a short time they'll be ridiculous to the very babies of a boarding-school.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Cap. S. Well, Belville, what news? You have had a fresh opportunity with Miss Walsingham.

Bel. Why, faith! Savage, I've had a most extraordinary scene with her, and yet have but little reason to brag of my good fortune, though she offered in express terms to run away with me.

Cap. S. Pr'ythee, explain yourself, man; she couldn't surely be so shameless!

Bel. Oh! her offering to run away with me was by no means the worst part of the affair.

Cap. S. No; then it must be d—d bad, indeed. But, pr'ythee, hurry to an explanation.

Bel. Why, then, the worst part of the affair is, that she was laughing at me the whole time, and made this proposal of an elopement, with no other view than to show me in strong colours to myself as a very dirty fellow to the best wife in England.

Cap. S. I am easy.

(*Aside.*)

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Sir, there is an Irish gentleman below with a letter for you, who will deliver it to nobody but yourself.

Bel. Show him up, then.

Spruce. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Cap. S. It may be on business, Belville; I'll take my leave of you.

Bel. Oh! by no means; I can have no business which I desire to keep from you, though you are the arrantest miser of your confidence upon earth, and would rather trust your life in anybody's hands than even a paltry amour with the apprentice of a milliner.

Enter CONNOLLY.

Con. Gentlemen, your most obedient; pray which of you is Mr. Belville?

Bel. My name is Belville, at your service, sir.

Con. I have a little bit of a letter for you, sir.

Bel. (*Reads.*) "Sir,—The people where Miss Leeson lately lodged, asserting positively that you have taken her away in a fictitious character, the brother of that unhappy girl thinks himself obliged to demand satisfaction for the injury which you have done his family. Though a stranger to your person, he is sufficiently acquainted with your reputation for spirit, and shall, therefore, make no doubt of seeing you with a case of pistols, near the ring in Hyde Park

at eight o'clock this evening, to answer the claims of

"GEORGE LEESON."

"Craggs Belville, Esq."

Cap. S. Eight o'clock in the evening! 'Tis a strange time!

Con. Why so, honey! A fine evening is as good a time for a bad action as a fine morning; and, if a man of sense can be such a fool as to fight a duel, he should never sleep upon the matter, for the more he thinks of it, the more he must feel himself ashamed of his resolution.

Bel. A pretty letter!

Con. Oh! yes, an invitation to a brace of bullets is a very pretty thing.

Bel. For a challenge, however, 'tis very civilly written.

Con. 'Faith! if it was written to me, I shouldn't be very fond of such civility; I wonder he doesn't sign himself your most obedient servant.

Cap. S. I told you Leeson's character, and what would become of this d—d business; but your affairs—are they settled, Belville?

Bel. Oh! they are always settled; for as this is a country where people occasionally die, I take constant care to be provided for contingencies.

Con. Occasionally die! I'll be very much obliged to you, sir, if you tell me the country where people do not die; for I'll immediately go and end my days there.

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!

Con. 'Faith! you may laugh, gentlemin, but though I am a foolish Irishman, and come about a foolish piece of business, I'd prefer a snug berth in this world, bad as it is, to the finest coffin in all Christendom.

Bel. I am surprised, sir, that, thinking in this manner, you would be the bearer of a challenge.

Con. And well you may, sir; but we must often take a pleasure in serving our friends, by doing things that are very disagreeable to us.

Cap. S. Then you think Mr. Leeson much to blame, perhaps, for hazarding his life where he can by no means repair the honour of his sister.

Con. Indeed and I do; but I shall think this gentlemin, begging his pardon, much more to blame for meeting him.

Bel. And why so, sir? You wouldn't have me disappoint your friend?

Con. 'Faith! and that I would; he, poor lad, may have some reason, at present, to be tired of the world; but you have a fine estate, a fine wife, a fine parcel of children. I short, honey, you have everything to make you fond of living, and the devil burn me, were I in your case, if I'd stake my own happiness against the misery of any man.

Bel. I am very much obliged to your advice, sir, though on the present occasion I cannot adopt it. Be so good as to present my compliments to your friend, and tell him I shall certainly do myself the honour of attending to his appointment.

Con. Why, then, upon my soul, I am very sorry for it.

Cap. S. 'Tis not very customary, sir, with gentlemen of Ireland, to oppose an affair of honour.

Con. They are like the gentlemin of England, sir—they are brave to a fault; yet I hope to see

the day that it will be infamous to draw the swords of either against anybody but the enemies of their country.

[Exit. Bel. I am quite charmed with this honest Hibernian, and would almost fight a duel for the pleasure of his acquaintance.

Cap. S. Come, step with me a little, and let us consider whether there may not be some method of accommodating this cursed business.

Bel. Poh! don't be uneasy on my account; my character, with regard to affairs of this nature, is, unhappily, too well established, and you may be sure that I sha'n't fight with Leeson.

Cap. S. No! you have injured him greatly.

Bel. The very reason, of all others, why I should not cut his throat.

[Exit.

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. What, the devil, this master of mine has got a duel upon his hands! Zounds! I am sorry for that; he is a prince of a fellow; and a good subject must always love his prince, though he may now and then be a little out of humour with his actions.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. Your hall-door standing open, Spruce, and none of your sentinels being on guard, I have surprised your camp thus far without resistance. Where is your master?

Spruce. Just gone out with Captain Savage, sir.

Gen. Is your lady at home?

Spruce. No, sir; but Miss Walsingham is at home; shall I inform her of your visit?

Gen. There is no occasion to inform her of it, for here she is, Spruce.

[Exit Spruce.

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM.

Miss W. General Savage, your most humble servant.

Gen. My dear Miss Walsingham, it is rather cruel that you should be left at home by yourself, and yet I am greatly rejoiced to find you at present without company.

Miss W. I can't but think myself in the best company, when I have the honour of your conversation, general.

Gen. You flatter me too much, madam; yet I am come to talk to you on a serious affair, Miss Walsingham; an affair of importance to me and to yourself. Have you leisure to favour me with a short audience, if I beat a parley?

Miss W. Anything of importance to you, sir, is always sufficient to command my leisure. 'Tis as the captain suspected.

[Aside.]

Gen. You tremble, my lovely girl, but don't be alarmed; for though my business is of an important nature, I hope it won't be of a disagreeable one.

Miss W. And yet I am greatly agitated.

[Aside.]

Gen. Soldiers, Miss Walsingham, are said to

be generally favoured by the kind partiality of the ladies.

Miss W. The ladies are not without gratitude, sir, to those who devote their lives peculiarly to the service of their country.

Gen. Generously said, madam; then give me leave, without any masked battery, to ask, if the heart of an honest soldier is a prize at all worth your acceptance.

Miss W. Upon my word, sir, there's no masked battery in this question.

Gen. I am as fond of a *coup de main*, madam, in love, as in war. I hate the method of sapping a town when there is a possibility of entering sword in hand.

Miss W. Why, really, sir, a woman may as well know her own mind, when she is first summoned by the trumpet of a lover, as when she undergoes all the tiresome formality of a siege. You see, I have caught your own mode of conversing, general.

Gen. And a very great compliment I consider it, madam; but now that you have candidly confessed an acquaintance with your own mind, answer me with that frankness with which everybody admires you much. Have you any objection to change the name of Walsingham?

Miss W. Why, then, frankly, General Savage, I say, no.

Gen. Ten thousand thanks to you for this kind declaration.

Miss W. I hope you won't think it a forward one.

Gen. I'd sooner see my son run away in the day of battle; I'd sooner think Lord Russell was bribed by Louis the XIVth, and sooner vilify the memory of Algernon Sydney.

Miss W. How unjust it was ever to suppose the general a tyrannical father!

(Aside.)

Gen. You have told me condescendingly, Miss Walsingham, that you have no objection to change your name; I have but one more question to ask.

Miss W. Pray propose it.

Gen. Would the name of Savage be disagreeable to you? Speak frankly again, my dear girl!

Miss W. Why, then, again, I frankly say, no.

Gen. You make me too happy; and though I shall readily own, that a proposal of this nature would come with more propriety from my son—

Miss W. I am much better pleased that you make the proposal yourself, sir.

Gen. You are too good to me. Torrington thought that I should meet with a repulse.

(Aside.)

Miss W. Have you communicated this business to the captain, sir?

Gen. No, my dear madam, I did not think that at all necessary. I have always been attentive to the captain's happiness, and I propose that he shall be married in a few days.

Miss W. What, whether I will or no?

Gen. Oh! you can have no objection.

Miss W. I must be consulted, however, about the day, general; but nothing in my power shall be wanting to make him happy.

Gen. Obliging loveliness!

Miss W. You may imagine that if I were not previously impressed in favour of your proposal, it would not have met my concurrence so readily.

Gen. Then you own that I had a previous friend in the garrison?

Miss W. I don't blush to acknowledge it, when I consider the accomplishments of the object, sir.

Gen. Oh! this is too much, madam; the principal merit of the object is his passion for Miss Walsingham.

Miss W. Don't say that, general, I beg of you; for I don't think there are many women in the kingdom who could behold him with indifference.

Gen. Ah! you flattering—flattering angel! and yet, by the memory of Marlborough, my lovely girl, it was the idea of a prepossession on your part which encouraged me to hope for a favourable reception.

Miss W. Then I must have been very indiscreet, for I laboured to conceal that prepossession as much as possible.

Gen. You couldn't conceal it from me: you couldn't conceal it from me. The female heart is a field which I am thoroughly acquainted with, and which has, more than once, been a witness to my victories, madam.

Miss W. I don't at all doubt your success with the ladies, general; but as we now understand one another so perfectly, you will give me leave to retire.

Gen. One word, my dear creature, and no more; I shall wait upon you sometime to-day, with Mr. Torrington, about the necessary settlements.

Miss W. You must do as you please, general; you are invincible in everything.

Gen. And if you please, we'll keep everything a profound secret till the articles are all settled, and the definitive treaty ready for execution.

Miss W. You may be sure that delicacy will not suffer me to be communicative on the subject, sir.

Gen. Then you leave everything to my management.

Miss W. I can't trust a more noble negotiator. [Exit.]

Gen. The day's my own. (Sings.) "Britons, strike home; strike home! Revenge," &c. [Exit.]

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I.—Miss Leeson's Lodgings.

Enter LADY RACHEL MILDEW, MRS. BELVILLE, and MISS LEESON.

Lady R. Well, Mrs. Belville, I am extremely glad you agree with me in opinion of this young lady's qualifications for the stage. Don't you think she'd play Miss Headstrong admirably in my comedy?

Mrs. B. Yes, indeed, I think she possesses a natural fund of spirit very much adapted to the character. 'Tis impossible, surely, that this hoyden can have a moment's attraction for Mr. Belville.

(Aside.)

Miss L. You are very obliging, ladies; but I

have no turn for comedy; my forte is tragedy entirely. "Alphonso! Oh! Alphonso, to thee I call."

*Lady R.* But, my dear, are there none of our comedies to your taste?

*Miss L.* Oh! yes; some of the sentimental ones are very pretty; there's such little differences between them and tragedies.

*Lady R.* And pray, my dear, how long have you been engaged to Mr. Frankly?

*Miss L.* I only came away last night, and have not seen Mr. Frankly since, though I expect him every moment.

(*Aside.*)

*Mrs. B.* Last night! Just as Mrs. Tempest mentioned.

*Lady R.* You had the concurrence of your friends?

*Miss L.* Not I, madam. Mr. Frankly said I had too much genius to mind my friends; and as I should want nothing from them, there was no occasion to consult them in the affair.

*Lady R.* Then Osbaldiston is not your real name, perhaps?

*Miss L.* Oh! no; nor do I tell my real name. I chose Osbaldiston because it was a long one, and would make a striking appearance in the bills.

*Mrs. B.* I wish we could see Mr. Frankly.

*Miss L.* Perhaps you may, madam; for he designs to give me a lesson every day, till we are ready to set off for Ireland.

*Lady R.* Suppose, then, my dear, you would oblige us with a scene in Juliet, by way of showing your proficiency to Mrs. Belville.

*Miss L.* Will you stand up for Romeo?

*Lady R.* With all my heart, and I'll give you some instructions.

*Miss L.* I beg pardon, ma'am; I'll learn to act under nobody but Mr. Frankly. This room is without a carpet; if you will step into the next, ladies, I'll endeavour to oblige you. "Shall I not be environed distraught"—This way, ladies.

*Lady R.* Pray, madam, show us the way.

[*Exit with Miss Lee.*]

*Mrs. B.* I'll prolong this mummery as much as possible, in hopes the manager may come. Lie still, poor, fluttering heart, it cannot be the lord of all your wishes; it cannot, surely, be your adored Belville!

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter MISS LEESON.

*Miss L.* Haven't I left my Romeo and Juliet here? Oh, yes! there it is.

Enter BELVILLE.

*Bel.* "Oh, were those eyes in heav'n,  
They'd thro' the starry regions stream so bright,  
That birds would sing, and think it was the morn."

*Miss L.* Ah, my dear Miss Frankly, I am so glad you are come! I was dying to see you.

*Bel.* Kiss me, my dear; why didn't you send me word of your intention to come away last night?

*Miss L.* I hadn't time; but as I knew where

the lodgings were, I thought I should be able to find you by a note to the coffee-house I always directed to.

*Bel.* Kiss me again, my little sparkler.

*Miss L.* Nay, I won't be kissed in this manner; for though I am going on the stage, I intend to have some regard for my character. But—ha, ha!—I am glad you are come now. I have company above stairs.

*Bel.* Company! That's unlucky at this time, for I wanted to make you entirely easy about your character. (*Aside.*) And pray, my dear, who is your company? You know we must be very cautious for fear of your relations.

*Miss L.* Oh, they are only ladies. But one of them is the most beautiful creature in the world.

*Bel.* The devil she is!

*Miss L.* "An earth-treading star, that makes dim heaven's light."

*Bel.* Zounds, I'll take a peep at the star! Who knows but I may have an opportunity of making another actress?

(*Aside.*)

*Miss L.* Come, charmer, charmer!

*Bel.* "Wert thou as far

As that vast shore, wash'd by the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise." Now let's see what fortune has sent us above stairs.

[*Re-ent.*]

SCENE II.—A dining-room at Miss Leeson's.

MRS. BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL discovered.

*Mrs. B.* This is a most ignorant young creature, Lady Rachel.

*Lady R.* Why, I think she is. Did you observe how she slighted my offer of instructing her?

Enter MISS LEESON.

*Miss L.* Ladies, ladies! here he is!—here is Mr. Frankly!

Enter BELVILLE, bowing very low.

*Bel.* Ladies, your most obedient.

*Mrs. B.* Let me, if possible, recollect myself. Sir, your most obedient, humble servant.

*Bel.* Zounds! let me out of the house.

*Lady R.* What do I see?

*Miss L.* You seem, ladies, to know this gentleman.

*Mrs. B.* (*Detaining him.*) You sha'n't go, renegade. You laughed at my credulity this morning, and I must now laugh at your embarrassment.

*Bel.* What a kind thing it would be in anybody to blow out my stupid brains!

*Lady R.* I'll mark this down for an incident in my comedy.

*Miss L.* What do you hang your head for, Mr. Frankly?

*Bel.* Be so good as to ask that lady, my dear. The devil has been long in my debt, and now he pays me home with a witness.

*Mrs. B.* What a cruel thing it is to let Mrs. Tempest out, my love, without somebody to take care of her!

*Miss L.* What, do you know Mrs. Tempest, madam?

*Mrs. B.* Yes, my dear; and I am pretty well acquainted with this gentleman.

*Miss L.* What, isn't this gentleman the manager of a play-house in Ireland?

*Bel.* The curtain is almost dropped, my dear; the farce is nearly over, and you'll be speedily acquainted with the catastrophe.

*Enter MRS. TEMPEST.*

*Mrs. T.* Yes, sir, the curtain is almost dropped. I have had spies to watch your haunts, and the catastrophe ends in your detection. Come, you abandoned slut—

*Miss L.* And have I eloped, after all, without being brought upon the stage?

*Mrs. T.* I don't know that you would be brought upon the stage, but I am sure you were near being brought upon the town. I hope, madam, for the future, you'll set me down a mad woman.

*(To Mrs. B.)*

*Mrs. B.* Mr. Belville, you'll make my apologies to this lady, and acknowledge that I think her perfectly in her senses.

*Bel.* I wish that I had entirely lost mine.

*Lady R. (Writing.)* "I wish that I had entirely lost mine." A very natural wish, in such a situation.

*Mrs. T.* Come, you audacious minx, come away. You shall be sent into Yorkshire this very evening; and see what your poor mother will say to you, hussy.

*Miss L.* I will go on the stage if I die for it; and 'tis some comfort there's a play-house at York.

*[Exit with Mrs. T.]*

*Bel.* Nancy, I am so ashamed, so humbled, and so penitent, that if you knew what passes here, I am sure you would forgive me.

*Mrs. B.* My love, though I cannot say I rejoice in your infidelity, yet, believe me, I pity your distress—let us, therefore, think no more of this.

*Lady R. (Writing.)* "And think no more of this." This conduct is new in a wife, and very dramatic.

*Bel.* Where, my angel, have you acquired so many requisites to charm with?

*Mrs. B.* In your society, my dear; and, believe me, that a wife may be as true a friend as any bottle companion upon earth, though she can neither get merry with you over-night, nor blow out your brains about some foolish quarrel in the morning.

*Bel.* If wives knew the omnipotence of virtue, where she wears a smile upon her face, they'd all follow your bewitching example, and make a faithless husband quite an incredible character.

*Lady R. (Writing.)* "Quite an incredible character." Let me set down that.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.—*General Savage's House.*

*Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and CAPTAIN SAVAGE.*

*Gen.* Yes, Horace, I have been just visiting at Belville's.

*Cap. S.* You found nobody at home but Miss Walsingham?

*Gen.* No; but I'd a long conversation with her, and upon a very interesting subject.

*Cap. S.* 'Tis as I guessed.

*(Aside.)*

*Gen.* She is a most amiable creature, Horace.

*Cap. S.* So she is, sir, and will make any man happy that marries her.

*Gen.* I am glad you think so.

*Cap. S.* He's glad I think so! 'tis plain; but I must leave everything to himself, and seem wholly passive in this affair.

*(Aside.)*

*Gen.* A married life, after all, Horace, I am now convinced, is the most happy, as well as the most reputable.

*Cap. S.* It is indeed, sir.

*Gen.* Then, perhaps, you would have no objection to be married, if I offered you as agreeable a young woman as Miss Walsingham?

*Cap. S.* 'T would be my first pride on every occasion, sir, to pay an implicit obedience to your commands.

*Gen.* That's sensibly said, Horace, and obligingly said; prepare yourself, therefore, for an introduction to the lady in the morning.

*Cap. S.* Is the lady prepared to receive me, sir?

*Gen.* Oh, yes! and you can't think how highly delighted Miss Walsingham appeared when I acquainted her with my resolution on the subject.

*Cap. S.* She's all goodness.

*Gen.* The more I know her, the more I am charmed with her. I must not be explicit with him yet, for fear my secret should get wind, and reach the ears of the enemy. *(Aside.)* I propose, Horace, that you should be married immediately.

*Cap. S.* The sooner the better, sir; I have no will but yours.

*Gen. (Shaking hands with him.)* By the memory of Marlborough, you are a most excellent boy. But what do you think? Miss Walsingham insists upon naming the day.

*Cap. S.* And welcome, sir; I am sure she won't make it a distant one.

*Gen.* Oh, she said that nothing in her power should be wanting to make you happy!

*Cap. S.* I am sure of that, sir.

*(A loud knocking.)*

*Gen.* Zounds, Horace! here's the disgrace and punishment of my life. Let's avoid her as we would a fever in a camp.

*Cap. S.* Come to the library, and I'll tell you how whimsically she was treated this morning at Belville's.

*Gen.* Death and the devil! make haste! Oh, I must laugh at marriage, and be cursed to me! But I am providing, Horace, against your falling into my error.



Cap. S. I am eternally indebted to you, sir.  
[*Exit.*]

## SCENE IV.

Enter MRS. BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

Lady R. Nay, Mrs. Belville, I have no patience, you act quite unaturally.

Mrs. B. What, because I am unwilling to be miserable?

Lady R. This new instance of Mr. Belville's infidelity—this attempt to seduce Miss Walsingham, which your woman overheard, is unpardonable.

Mrs. B. I don't say but that I am strongly wounded by his irregularities. Yet, if Mr. Belville is unhappily a rover, I would much rather that he should have twenty mistresses than one.

Lady R. You astonish me.

Mrs. B. Why, don't you know, my dear madam, that while he is divided amidst a variety of objects, 'tis impossible for him to have a serious attachment?

Lady R. Lord, Mrs. Belville, how can you speak with so much composure! A virtuous woman should be always outrageous upon such an occasion as this.

Mrs. B. What, and weary the innocent sun and moon from the firmament, like a despairing princess in a tragedy? No, no, Lady Rachel; 'tis bad enough to be indifferent to the man I love, without studying to excite his aversion.

Lady R. How glad I am that Miss Walsingham made him so heartily ashamed of himself! Lord! these young men are so full of levity! Give me a husband of Mr. Torrington's age, say I.

Mrs. B. And give me a husband of Mr. Belville's, say I, with all his follies. However, Lady Rachel, I am pretty well satisfied that my conduct at Miss Leeson's will have a proper effect upon Mr. Belville's generosity, and put an entire end to his gallantries for the future.

Lady R. Don't deceive yourself, my dear. The gods in the shilling gallery would sooner give up roast beef, or go without an epilogue on the first night of a new piece.

Mrs. B. Why should you think so of such a man as Mr. Belville?

Lady R. Because Mr. Belville is a man. However, if you dare run the risk, we will try the sincerity of his reformation.

Mrs. B. If I dare run the risk! I would stake my soul upon his honour.

Lady R. Then your poor soul would be in a very terrible situation.

Mrs. B. By what test can we prove his sincerity?

Lady R. By a very simple one. You know I write so like Miss Walsingham, that our hands are scarcely known asunder.

Mrs. B. Well—

Lady R. Why, then, let me write to him as from her.

Mrs. B. If I did not think that it would look like a doubt on his honour.

Lady R. Poh! Dare you proceed upon my plan?

Mrs. B. Most confidently. Come to my dressing-room, where you'll find everything ready for writing, and then you may explain your scheme more particularly.

Lady R. I'll attend you; but I am really sorry, my dear, for the love of propriety, to see you so calm under the perfidy of your husband; you should be quite wretched—indeed you should.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Temple.*

Enter LEESON.

Lee. The hell-hounds are after me.

Enter CONNOLLY.

Fly!—open the chambers this moment, the bailiffs are in sight!

Con. Faith, and that I will; but it will be of no use to fly a step if I haven't the key.

Lee. Zounds! did not you lock the door?

Con. Yes; but I believe I left the key on the inside. However, I see no more than three people, and I think we could beat them to their hearts' content in three minutes.

Lee. What, and fly in the face of the law?

Con. To be sure you have a great regard for law, when you are going to fight a duel.

Lee. 'Sdeath! is this a time to talk? Stay here, and throw every possible impediment in the way of these execrable rascals.

(*Going.*)

Con. Holloa, honey! come back. These execrable rascals are very worthy people, I fancy, for they are quietly turning down the next court.

Lee. Their appearance alarmed me beyond measure.

Con. Oh, you shouldn't judge by outside show, my dear; for there is no being a complete rogue without the appearance of an honest man.

Lee. Circumstanced as I am at present, everything terrifies me; for should I be arrested, the consequence would possibly be fatal, both to my honour and my love. Belville would proclaim me publicly a coward; and Emily set me down as a base, a mercenary adventurer, who was solely attracted by her fortune.

Con. Why, faith, honey! like yourself, they might be apt to judge by appearances.

Lee. Oh, Connolly! a man of spirit should learn prudence from his very pride, and consider every unnecessary debt he contracts as a wanton diminution of his character. The moment he makes another creditor, he makes himself a slave. He runs the hazard of insults which he never can resent, and of disgraces which are seldom to be mitigated. He incurs the danger of being dragged, like the vilest felon to the felon's prison; and, such is the depravity of the world, that guilt is even more likely to meet with advocates, than misfortune.

[*Exit.*]

Con. Musha! long life to you, ould Shillala! I wish I had anything besides my carcass to venture for you, for that's nothing; yet you are as welcome to it as the flowers in May. Poor lad! I don't wonder that he is so much afraid of a

prison, for, to be sure, it is a blessed place to live in; and a blessed law it must be which coops a man up from every chance of getting money, by way of making him pay his debts. But now let my thick skull consider, if there is any method of preventing this infernal duel. Suppose I have him bound over to the peace. No, that will never do; it would be a shameful thing for a gentleman to keep the peace! Besides, I must appear in the business; and people may think, from my connexion with him, that he has not honour enough to throw away his life. Suppose I go another way to work, and send an anonymous letter about the affair to Mrs. Belville; they say, though, she is a woman of fashion, that no creter upon earth can be fonder of her husband. Surely, the good genius of Ireland put this scheme into my head. I'll about it this minute; and if there's only one of them kept from the field, I don't think that the other can be much hurt when there will be nobody to fight with him.

[Exit.

SCENE V.—*Captain Savage's Lodgings.*

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE and BELVILLE.

Cap. S. Why, 'faith, Belville! your detection, and so speedily, too, after all the pretended sanctity of the morning, must have thrown you into a most humiliating situation.

Bel. Into the most distressing one you can imagine. Had my wife raved at my falsehood in the customary manner, I could have brazened it out pretty tolerably; but the angel-like sweetness with which she bore the mortifying discovery planted daggers in my bosom, and made me, at that time, wish her the veriest vixen in creation.

Cap. S. Yet, the suffering forbearance of a wife is a quality for which she is seldom allowed her merit. We think it her duty to put up with our falsehood, and imagine ourselves exceedingly generous in the main, if we practice no other method of breaking her heart.

Bel. Monstrous, monstrous! From this moment I bid an everlasting adieu to my vices. The generosity of my dear girl—

Enter a Servant.

Ser. (To Bel.) Here's a letter, sir, which Mr. Spruce has brought you.

Bel. Give me leave, Savage. Zounds! what an industrious devil the father of darkness is, when the moment a man determines upon a good action, he sends such a thing as this to stagger his resolution.

Cap. S. What have you got there?

Bel. You shall know presently. Will you let Spruce come in?

Cap. S. Where have you acquired all this ceremony?

Bel. Bid Spruce come in.

Ser. Yes, sir.

[Exit.

Cap. S. Is that another challenge?

Bel. 'Tis, upon my soul; but it comes from a

beautiful enemy, and dares me to give a meeting to Miss Walsingham.

Cap. S. How?

Enter SPRUCE.

Bel. Pray, Spruce, who gave you this letter? Spruce. Miss Walsingham's woman, sir. She said it was about very particular business, and, therefore, I wouldn't trust it by any of the footmen.

Cap. S. Oh! d— your diligence!

(Aside.)

Bel. You may go home, Spruce.

Spruce. Is there no answer necessary, sir?

Bel. I shall call at home myself, and give the necessary answer.

Spruce. What can be the matter with him all of a sudden, that he is so cold upon the scent of wickedness?

[Aside, and exit.

Cap. S. And what answer do you propose making to it, Belville?

Bel. Read the letter, and then tell me what I should do. You know Miss Walsingham's hand.

Cap. S. Oh! perfectly. This is not—yes, it is her hand. I have too many cursed occasions to know it.

(Aside.)

Bel. What are you muttering about? Read the letter.

Cap. S. (Reads.) "If you are not entirely discouraged, by our last conversation, from renewing the subject which then gave offence—"

Bel. Which then gave offence! You see, Savage, that it is not offensive any longer.

Cap. S. 'Sdeath! you put me out. (Reads.) "You may, at the masquerade, this evening—"

Bel. You remember how earnest she was for the masquerade party.

Cap. S. Yes, yes; I remember it well. And I remember, also, how hurt she was this morning about the affair of Miss Leeson. (Aside. Reads.)

"Have an opportunity of entertaining me." Oh! the strumpet!

(Aside.)

Bel. But mind the cunning with which she signs the note, for fear it should by any accident fall into improper hands.

Cap. S. (Aside.) Ay, and you put it into very proper hands. (Reads.) "I shall be in the blue domino." The signature is—"You Know Who."

Bel. Yes; you know who!

Cap. S. May be, however, she has only written this to try you.

Bel. To try me! for what purpose? But if you read a certain postscript there, I fancy you'll be of a different opinion.

Cap. S. (Reads.) "If Mr. Belville has any house of character to retire in, it would be most agreeable, as there could be no fear of interruption."

Bel. What do you say now? Can you recommend me to any house of character, where we shall be free from interruption?

Cap. S. Oh! curse her house of character.

(Aside.) But, surely, Belville, after your late determined resolution to reform—

Bel. Zounds! I forgot that.

Cap. S. After the unexampl'd sweetness of your wife's behaviour—

Bel. Don't go on, Savage. There is something here (putting his hand upon his bosom) which feels already not a little awkwardly.

Cap. S. And can you still persist?

Bel. I am afraid to answer your question.

Cap. S. Where the plague are you flying?

Bel. From the justice of your censure, Horace. My own is sufficiently severe; yet I see that I shall be a rascal again, in spite of my teeth; and good advice is only thrown away upon so incorrigible a libertine.

[Exit.

Cap. S. So, then, this diamond of mine proves a counterfeit after all, and I am really the veriest wretch existing, at the moment in which I conceived myself the peculiar favourite of fortune. Oh, the cursed, cursed sex! I'll see her once more, to upbraid her with her falsehood; then acquaint my father with her perfidy, to justify my breaking off the marriage, and tear her from my thoughts for ever.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, sir, sir—

Cap. S. Sir, sir, sir! What the devil's the matter with the booby?

Ser. Miss Walsingham, sir—

Cap. S. Ah! what of her?

Ser. Was this moment overturned at Mr. Belville's door, and, John tells me, carried in a fit into the house.

Cap. S. Ha! let me fly to her assistance.

Ser. Ha! let me fly to her assistance! Oh! are you thereabouts?

[Exit.

[Exit.

#### SCENE VI.—Mr. Belville's.

Enter MRS. BELVILLE, MISS WALSHINGHAM, and LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

Mrs. B. But are you, indeed, recovered, my dear?

Miss W. Perfectly, my dear. I wasn't in the least hurt, though greatly terrified, when the two fools of coachmen contended for the honour of being first, and drove the carriages together with a violence incredible.

Lady R. I sincerely rejoice at your escape; and now, Mrs. Belville, as you promised to choose a dress for me, if I went in your party to the masquerade this evening, can you spare a quarter of an hour to Tavistock Street?

Mrs. B. I am loth to leave Miss Walsingham alone, Lady Rachel, so soon after her fright.

Miss W. Nay, I insist that you don't stay at home upon my account; and Lady Rachel's company to the masquerade is a pleasure I have such an interest in, that I beg you won't delay a moment to oblige her.

Mrs. B. Well, then, I attend your ladyship.

Lady R. You are very good, and so is Miss Walsingham.

[Exit with Mrs. B.

Miss W. I wonder Captain Savage stays away so long! Where can he be all this time? I die with impatience to tell him of my happy interview with the general.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Captain Savage, madam.

Miss W. Show him in. [Exit Ser.] How he must rejoice to find his conjectures so fortunately realized!

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Cap. S. So, madam, you have just escaped a sad accident.

Miss W. And by that agreeable tone and countenance, one would almost imagine you were very sorry for my escape.

Cap. S. People, madam, who doubt the kindness of others are generally conscious of some defect in themselves.

Miss W. Don't madam me, with this accent of indifference. What has put you out of humour?

Cap. S. Nothing.

Miss W. Are you indisposed?

Cap. S. The crocodile, the crocodile!

(Aside.)

Miss W. Do you go to the masquerade to-night?

Cap. S. No; but you do.

Miss W. Why not? Come, don't be ill-natured; I'm not your wife yet.

Cap. S. Nor ever will be, I promise you.

Miss W. What is the meaning of this very whimsical behaviour?

Cap. S. The settled composure of her impudence is intolerable. (Aside.) Madam, madam, how have I deserved this usage?

Miss W. Nay, sir, sir, how have I deserved it, if you go to that?

Cap. S. The letter, madam—the letter.

Miss W. What letter?

Cap. S. Your letter, inviting a gallant from the masquerade to a house of character, madam. What, you appear surprised.

Miss W. Well I may, at so shameless an aspersions.

Cap. S. Madam, madam, I have seen your letter. Your new lover could not keep your secret a moment. But I have nothing to do with you, and only come to declare my reasons for renouncing you everlastingly.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. General Savage, madam.

Miss W. Show him up. [Exit Ser.] I am glad he is come, sir. Inform him of your resolution to break off the match, and let there be an end of everything between us.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. The news of your accident reached me but this moment, madam, or I should have

posted much sooner to reconnoitre your situation. My aide-de-camp, however, has not been inattentive, I see; and I daresay his diligence will not be the least lessened, when he knows his obligations to you.

Cap. S. Oh! sir, I am perfectly sensible of my obligations; and the consciousness of them was one motive of my coming here.

Gen. Then you have made your acknowledgment to Miss Walsingham, I hope.

Miss W. He has, indeed, general, said a great deal more than was necessary.

Gen. That opinion proceeds from the liberality of your temper; for 'tis impossible he can ever say enough of your goodness.

Cap. S. So it is; if you knew but all, sir.

Gen. Why, who can know more of the matter than myself?

Miss W. This gentleman, it seems, has something, General Savage, very necessary for your information.

Gen. How's this?

Cap. S. Nay, sir, I only say, that for some particular reasons, which I shall communicate to you at a more proper time, I must beg leave to decline the lady whose hand you kindly intended for me this morning.

Gen. Oh! you must! Why, then, I hope you decline, at the same time, all pretensions to every shilling of my fortune. It is not in my power to make you fight, you poltroon, but I can punish you for cowardice.

Miss W. Nay, but, general, let me interpose here. If he can maintain any charge against the lady's reputation, 'twould be very hard that he should be disinherited, for a necessary attention to his honour.

Cap. S. And if I don't make the charge good, I submit to be disinherited without murmuring.

Gen. 'Tis false as hell! The lady is infinitely too good for you in every respect; and I undervalued her worth when I thought of her for your wife.

Miss W. I am sure the lady is much oblig'd to your favourable opinion, sir.

Gen. Not in the least, madam. I only do her common justice.

Cap. S. I cannot bear that you should be displeas'd a moment, sir. Suffer me, therefore, to render the conversation less equivocal, and a few words will explain everything.

Gen. Sirrah, I'll hear no explanation. Aren't my orders that you should marry?

Miss W. For my sake, hear him, General Savage.

Cap. S. Madam, I disdain every favour that is to be procured by your interposition.

[Exit.

Miss W. This matter must not be suffered to proceed farther, though provokingly cruelly as the captain has behaved.

[Aside.]

Gen. What's that you say, my bewitching girl?

Miss W. I say that you must make it up with the captain, and the best way will be to hear his charge patiently.

Gen. I am shocked at the brutality of the dog. He has no more principle than a sutler, and no more steadiness than a young recruit upon drill. But you shall have ample satis-

faction. This very day I'll cut him off from a possibility of succeeding to a shilling of my fortune. He shall be as miserable as—

Miss W. Dear general, do you think that this would give me any satisfaction?

Gen. How he became acquainted with my design, I know not; but I see plainly that his mutiny proceeds from his aversion to my marrying again.

Miss W. To your marrying again, sir! Why should he object to that?

Gen. Why, for fear I should have other children, to be sure.

Miss W. Indeed, sir, it was not from that motive; and, if I can overlook his folly, you may be prevailed upon to forgive it.

Gen. After what you have seen, justice should make you a little more attentive to your own interest, my lovely girl.

Miss W. What, at the expense of his?

Gen. In the approaching danger of your situation, there may be a family of your own.

Miss W. Suppose there should, sir; won't there be a family of his, too?

Gen. I care not what becomes of his family.

Miss W. But, pray, let me think a little about it, general.

Gen. 'Tis hard, indeed, when I was so desirous of promoting his happiness, that he should throw anything in the way of mine.

Miss W. Recollect, sir, his offence was wholly confined to me.

Gen. Well, my love, and isn't it throwing an obstacle in the way of my happiness when he abuses you so grossly for your readiness to marry me?

Miss W. Sir?

Gen. I see, with all your good nature, that this is a question you cannot rally against.

Miss W. It is, indeed, sir. What will become of me?

[Aside.]

Gen. You seem suddenly disorder'd, my love?

Miss W. Why, really, sir, this affair affects me strongly.

Gen. Well, it is possible that, for your sake, I may not punish him with as much severity as I intended. In about an hour, I shall beg leave to beat up your quarters again, with Mr. Torrington; for 'tis necessary I should show you some proof of my gratitude, since you have been so kindly pleased to honour me with a proof of your affection.

Miss W. [Aside.] So, now, indeed, we're in a hopeful situation!

[Exeunt.]

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—An Apartment at Belville's.

Enter MRS. BELVILLE and CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Mrs. B. Don't argue with me, Captain Savage; but consider that I am a wife, and pity my distraction.

*Cap. S.* Dear madam, there is no occasion to be so much alarmed. Mr. Belville has very properly determined not to fight. He told me so himself; and should have been effectually prevented, if I hadn't known his resolution.

*Mrs. B.* There is no knowing to what extremities he may be provoked, if he meets Mr. Leeson. I have sent for you, therefore, to beg that you will save him from the possibility, either of exposing himself to any danger, or of doing an injury to his adversary.

*Cap. S.* What would you have me do, madam?

*Mrs. B.* Fly to Hyde Park, and prevent, if yet possible, his meeting with Mr. Leeson. Do it, I conjure you, if you'd save me from desperation.

*Cap. S.* Though you have no reason whatever to be apprehensive for his safety, madam, yet, since you are so very much affected, I'll immediately execute your commands.

[Exit.

*Mrs. B.* Merciful heaven, where is the generosity, where is the sense, where is the shame of men, to find a pleasure in pursuits which they cannot remember without the meanest horror; which they cannot follow without the deepest fraud; and which they cannot effect without consequences the most dreadful? The single word, pleasure, in a masculine sense, comprehends everything that is cruel; everything that is base; and everything that is desperate. Yet, men, in other respects the noblest of their species, make it the principal business of their lives, and do not hesitate to break in upon the peace of the happiest families, though their own must be necessarily exposed to destruction. Oh! Belville, Belville! my life, my love! The greatest triumph which a libertine can ever experience is too despicable to be envied; 'tis, at best, nothing but a victory over his own humanity; and if he be a husband, he must be dead, indeed, if he is not doubly tortured upon the wheel of recollection.

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM, and LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

*Miss W.* My dear Mrs. Belville, I am extremely unhappy to see you so distressed.

*Lady R.* Now, I am extremely glad to see her so; for, if she weren't greatly distressed, it would be monstrously unnatural.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, Matilda! My husband, my husband!—my children, my children!

*Miss W.* Don't weep, my dear; don't weep; pray, be comforted; all may end happily. Lady Rachel, beg of her not to cry so.

*Lady R.* Why, you are crying yourself, Miss Walshingham; and though I think it out of character to encourage her tears, I can't help keeping you company.

*Mrs. B.* Oh! why is not some effectual method contrived to prevent this horrid practice of duelling?

*Lady R.* I'll expose it on the stage, since the law, now-a-days, kindly leaves the whole cognizance of it to the theatre.

*Miss W.* And yet, if the laws against it were as well enforced as the laws against destroying the

game, perhaps it would be equally for the benefit of the kingdom.

*Mrs. B.* No law will ever be effectual till the custom is rendered infamous. Wives must shriek, mothers must agonize, orphans must multiply, unless some blessed hand strips the fascinating glare from honourable murder, and bravely exposes the idol who is worshipped thus in blood. While it is disreputable to obey the laws, we cannot look for reformation; but if the duellist is once banished from the presence of his sovereign; if he is for life excluded the confidence of his country; if a mark of indelible disgrace be stamped upon him, the sword of public justice will be the sole chastiser of wrongs; trifles will not be punished with death; and offences really meriting such a punishment will be reserved for the only proper avenger—the common executioner.

*Lady R.* I couldn't have expressed myself better on the subject, my dear; but till such a hand as you talk of is found, the best will fall into the error of the times.

*Miss W.* Yes; and butcher each other like madmen, for fear their courage should be suspected by fools.

*Mrs. B.* No news yet from Captain Savage?

*Lady R.* He can't have reached Hyde Park yet, my dear.

*Miss W.* Let us lead you to your chamber, you'll be better there.

*Mrs. B.* Matilda, I must be wretched anywhere; but I'll attend you.

*Lady R.* Thank heaven, I have no husband to plunge me into such a situation.

*Miss W.* And if I thought I could keep my resolution, I'd determine this moment on living single all the days of my life. Pray, don't spare my arm, my dear.

[Exit.

## SCENE II.—Hyde Park.

Enter BELVILLE.

*Bel.* I fancy I am rather before the time of appointment; engagements of this kind are the only ones in which, now-a-days, people pretend to any punctuality. A man is allowed half-an-hour's law to dinner, but a thrust through the body must be given within a second of the clock.

Enter LEESON.

*Lee.* Your servant, sir. Your name, I suppose, is Belville?

*Bel.* Your supposition is very right, sir; and I fancy I am not much in the wrong, when I suppose your name to be Leeson.

*Lee.* It is, sir; I am sorry I should keep you here a moment.

*Bel.* I am very sorry, sir, you should bring me here at all.

*Lee.* I regret the occasion, be assured, sir; but 'tis not now a time for talking; we must proceed to action.

*Bel.* And yet, talking is all the action I shall proceed to, depend upon it.

*Lee.* What do you mean, sir? Where are your pistols?

*Bel.* Where I intend they shall remain till my next journey into the country—very quietly over the chimney in my dressing-room.

*Lee.* You treat this matter with too much levity, Mr. Belville; take your choice of mine, sir.

*Bel.* I'd rather take them both, if you please; for there no mischief shall be done with either of them.

*Lee.* Sir, this trifling is adding insult to injury, and shall be resented accordingly. Didn't you come here to give me satisfaction?

*Bel.* Yes; every satisfaction in my power.

*Lee.* Take one of these pistols, then.

*Bel.* Come, Mr. Leeson, your bravery will not at all be lessened by the exercise of a little understanding. If nothing less than my life can atone for the injury I have unconsciously done you, fire at me instantly, but don't be offended because I decline to do you an additional wrong.

*Lee.* 'Sdeath! sir, do you think I come here with an intention to murder?

*Bel.* You come to arm the guilty against the innocent, sir; and that, in my opinion, is the most atrocious intention of murder.

*Lee.* How's this?

*Bel.* Lookye, Mr. Leeson, there's your pistol. *(Throws it on the ground.)* I have already acted very wrongly with respect to your sister; but, sir, I have some character (though, perhaps, little enough) to maintain, and I will not do a still worse action, in raising my hand against your life.

*Lee.* This hypocritical cant of cowardice, sir, is too palpable to disarm my resentment; though I held you to be a man of prodigate principles, I nevertheless considered you as a man of courage; but if you hesitate a moment longer, by heaven, I'll chastise you on the spot.

*(Draws.)*

*Bel.* I must defend my life; though, if it did not look like timidity, I would inform you—*(They fight; Leeson is disarmed.)* Mr. Leeson, there is your sword again.

*Lee.* Strike it through my bosom, sir; I don't desire to outlive this instant.

*Bel.* I hope, my dear sir, that you will long live happy, as your sister, though to my shame I can claim no merit on that account, is recovered unpolluted, by her family; but let me beg that you will now see the folly of decisions by the sword, when success is not fortunately chained to the side of justice. Before I leave you, receive my sincerest apologies for the injuries I have done you; and, be assured, no occurrence will ever give me greater pleasure, than an opportunity of serving you, if, after what is past, you shall at any time condescend to use me as a friend.

*[Exit.]*

*Lee.* Very well, very well, very well.

*Enter CONNOLLY.*

What, you have been within hearing, I suppose?

*Con.* You may say that.

*Lee.* And isn't this very fine?

*Con.* Why, I can't say much as to the finery of it, sir; but it is certainly very foolish.

*Lee.* And so, this is my satisfaction after all!

*Con.* Yes; and pretty satisfaction it is. When Mr. Belville did you but one injury, he was the greatest villain in the world; but now that he has done you two, in drawing his sword upon you, I suppose he is a very worthy gentleman.

*Lee.* To be foiled baffled, disappointed in my revenge! What though my sister is, by accident, unstained, his intentions are as criminal as if her ruin were actually perpetrated; there is no possibility of enduring the reflection! I wish not for the blood of my enemy, but I would at least have the credit of giving him life.

*Con.* Arrah! My dear, if you had any regard for the life of your enemy, you shouldn't put him in the way of death.

*Lee.* No more of these reflections, my dear Connolly; my own feelings are painful enough. Will you be so good as to take these d—d pistols, and come with me to the coach?

*Con.* Troth, and that I will; but don't make yourself uneasy; consider that you have done everything which honour required at your hands.

*Lee.* I hope so.

*Con.* Why, you know so. You have broken the laws of heaven and earth as nobly as the first lord in the land; and you have convinced the world that where anybody has done your family one injury, you have courage enough to do it another yourself, by hazing your life.

*Lee.* Those, Connolly, who would live reputably in any country, must regulate their conduct, in many cases, by its very prejudices. Custom, with respect to duelling, is a tyrant, whose despotism nobody ventures to attack, though everybody detests its cruelty.

*Con.* I didn't imagine that a tyrant of any kind would be tolerated in England. But where do you think of going now? For chambers, you know, are, at present, most delightfully dangerous.

*Lee.* I shall go to Mrs. Crayon's.

*Con.* What, the gentlewoman that paints all manner of colours in red chalk?

*Lee.* Yes; where I first became acquainted with Emily.

*Con.* And where the sweet creature has met you two or three times under pretence of sitting for her picture.

*Lee.* Mrs. Crayon will, I dare say, oblige me in this exigency with an apartment for a few days; but, come, Connolly, we have no time to lose, though, if you had any prudence, you would abandon me in my present situation.

*Con.* Ah! sir, is this your opinion of my friendship? Do you think that anything can ever give me half so much pleasure in serving you, as seeing you surrounded by misfortunes?

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment at Belville's.*

*Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, TORRINGTON, and SPRUCE.*

*Spruce.* Miss Walsingham will wait on you immediately, gentlemen.

Gen. Very well.

Spruce. What can old Holifernes want so continually with Miss Walsingham?

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Gen. When I bring this sweet, mild creature home, I shall be able to break her spirit to my own wishes. I'll inure her to proper discipline from the first moment, and make her tremble at the very thought of mutiny.

Tor. Ah, general, you are wonderfully brave, when you know the meekness of your adversary.

Gen. Envy, Torrington; stark, staring envy. Few fellows, on the borders of fifty, have so much reason as myself, to boast of a blooming young woman's partiality.

Tor. On the borders of fifty, man! Beyond the confines of threescore.

Gen. The more reason I have to boast of my victory, then; but don't grumble at my triumph, you shall have a kiss of the bride; let that content you, Torrington.

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM.

Miss W. Gentlemen, your most obedient. General, I intended writing to you about a trifling mistake; but poor Mrs. Belville has been so very ill, that I couldn't find an opportunity.

Gen. I am sorry for Mrs. Belville's illness; but I am happy, madam, to be personally in the way of receiving your commands, and I wait upon you, with Mr. Torrington, to talk about a marriage settlement.

Miss W. Heavens! how shall I undeceive him?

[*Aside.*]

Tor. 'Tis rather an awkward business, Miss Walsingham, to trouble you upon; but as the general wishes that the affair may be as private as possible, he thought it better to speak to yourself, than to treat with any other person.

Gen. Yes, my lovely girl; and to convince you that I intend to carry on an honourable war, not to pillage like a free-booter, Mr. Torrington will be a trustee.

Miss W. I am infinitely obliged to your intention, but there's no necessity to talk about any settlement, for—

Gen. Pardon me, madam, pardon me, there is— Besides, I have determined that there shall be one, and what I once determine is absolute. A tolerable hint for her own behaviour, when I have married her, Torrington.

[*Apert to Tor.*]

Miss W. I must not shock him before Mr. Torrington. [*Aside.*] General Savage, will you give me leave to speak a few words in private to you?

Gen. There is no occasion for sounding a retreat, madam; Mr. Torrington is acquainted with the whole business, and I am determined, for your sake, that nothing shall be done without him.

Tor. I can have no objection to your hearing the lady *ex parte*, general.

Miss W. What I have to say, sir, is of a very particular nature.

Tor. [*Rising.*] I'll leave the room, then.

Gen. [*Opposing him.*] You sha'n't leave the

room, Torrington. Miss Walsingham shall have a specimen of my command even before marriage; and you shall see, that every woman is not to bully me out of my determination.

[*Apert to Tor.*]

Miss W. Well, general, you must have your own way.

Gen. [*To Tor.*] Don't you see that it's only fighting the battle stoutly at first with one of these gentle creatures?

Tor. Ah! general.

Gen. I own, madam, your situation is a distressing one; let us sit down—let us sit down.

Miss W. It is unspeakably distressing, indeed, sir.

Tor. Distressing, however, as it may be, we must proceed to issue, madam; the general proposes your jointure to be one thousand pounds a-year.

Miss W. General Savage—

Gen. You think this too little, perhaps?

Miss W. I can't think of any jointure, sir.

Tor. Why, to be sure, a jointure is, at best, but a melancholy possession, for it must be purchased by the loss of the husband you love.

Miss W. Pray, don't name it, Mr. Torrington.

Gen. [*Kissing her hand.*] A thousand thanks to you, my lovely girl.

Miss W. For heaven's sake, let go my hand.

Gen. I shall be mad till it gives me legal possession of the town.

Miss W. Gentlemen—general—Mr. Torrington, I beg you'll hear me.

Gen. By all means, my adorable creature; I can never have too many proofs of your disinterested affection.

Miss W. There is a capital mistake in this whole affair. I am sinking under a load of distress.

Gen. Your confusion makes you look charmingly, though.

Miss W. There is no occasion to talk of jointures or marriage to me; I am not going to be married.

Tor. What's this?

Miss W. Nor have I an idea in nature, however enviable I think the honour, of being your wife, sir.

Gen. Madam!

Tor. Why, here's a demur.

Miss W. I am afraid, sir, that in our conversation this morning, my confusion, arising from the particularity of the subject, has led you into a most material misconception.

Gen. I am thunderstruck, madam. I couldn't mistake my ground.

Tor. As clear a *not. pros.* as ever was issued by an attorney-general.

Gen. Surely, you can't forget, that at the first word you hung out a flag of truce; told me even that I had a previous friend in the fort, and didn't so much as hint at a single article of capitulation.

Tor. Now for the rejoinder of this replication.

Miss W. All this is unquestionably true, general, and perhaps a good deal more; but, in reality, my confusion before you on this subject to-day was such, that I scarcely knew what I said; I was dying with distress, and at this moment I am very little better. Permit me to retire, General Savage; and only suffer me to add, that though I think myself highly flattered by your addresses, it is impossible for me ever to receive

them. Lord, lord! I am glad it, is over in any manner.

[Exit,

Tor. Why, we are a little out in this matter, general; the judge has decided against us, when we imagined ourselves sure of the cause.

Gen. The gates shut in my teeth, just as I expected the keys from the governor

Tor. I am disappointed myself, man; I sha'n't have a kiss at the bride.

Gen. At my time of life, too!

Tor. I said from the first you were too old for her.

Gen. Zounds! to fancy myself sure of her, and to triumph upon a certainty of victory.

Tor. Ay, and to kiss her hand in a rapturous return for her tenderness to you. Let me advise you never to kiss before folks, as long as you live again.

Gen. Don't distract me, Torrington; a joke, where a friend has the misfortune to lose the battle, is a downright inhumanity.

Tor. You told me that her son had accused her of something that you would not hear. Suppose we call at his lodgings, he may, perhaps, be able to give us a little information.

Gen. Thank you for the thought; but keep your finger more than ever upon your lips. You know how I dread the danger of ridicule; and it would be too much, not only to be thrashed out of the field, but to be laughed at in the bargain.

Tor. I thought when you made a presentment of your sweet person to Miss Walsingham, that the bill would be returned ignoramus.

[Exeunt.

#### SCENE IV.—Belville's.

#### MRS. BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL MILDEW discovered.

Lady R. You heard what Captain Savage said?

Mrs. B. I would flatter myself, but my heart will not suffer it. The park might be too full for the horrid purpose; and, perhaps, they are gone to decide the quarrel in some other place.

Lady R. The captain inquired of numbers in the park, without hearing a syllable of them; and is, therefore, positive that they have parted without doing any mischief.

Mrs. B. I am, nevertheless, torn by a thousand apprehensions; and my fancy, with a gloomy kind of fondness, fastens on the most deadly. This very morning, I exultantly numbered myself in the catalogue of the happiest wives. Perhaps I am a wife no longer; perhaps, my little innocents! Your unhappy father is at this moment breathing his last sigh, and wishing—oh, how vainly!—that he had not preferred a guilty pleasure to his own life, to my eternal piece of mind, and your felicity!

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Madam, madam, my master, my master!

Mrs. B. Is he safe?

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. My love!

Mrs. B. Oh, Mr. Belville!

(Points.)

Bel. Assistance, quick!

Lady R. There, she revives.

Bel. The angel softness! How this rends my heart!

Mrs. B. Oh, Mr. Belville! if you could conceive the agonies I have endured, you would avoid the possibility of another quarrel as long as you lived out of common humanity.

Bel. My dearest creature, spare these tender reproaches; you know not how sufficiently I am punished to see you thus miserable.

Lady R. That's pleasant, indeed, when you have yourself deliberately loaded her with affliction.

Bel. Pray, Lady Rachel, have a little mercy? Your poor humble servant has been a very naughty boy; but if you only forgive him this single time, he will never more deserve the rod of correction.

Mrs. B. Since you are returned safe, I am happy. Excuse these foolish tears, they gush in spite of me.

Bel. How contemptible they render me, my love!

Lady R. Come, my dear, you must turn your mind from this gloomy subject. Suppose we step up-stairs and communicate our pleasure to Miss Walsingham?

Mrs. B. With all my heart. Adieu, recreant.

[Exit with Lady R.

Bel. I don't deserve such a woman! Yet, I believe, I am the first husband that ever found fault with a wife for having too much goodness.

Enter SPRUCE.

What's the matter?

Spruce. Your sister—

Bel. What of my sister?

Spruce. Sir, she has eloped.

Bel. My sister!

Spruce. There is a letter left, sir, in which she says, that her motive was a dislike to a match with Captain Savage, as she has placed her affections unalterably on another gentleman.

Bel. Death and d—!

Spruce. Mrs. Moreland, your mother, is in the greatest distress, sir; and begs you will immediately go with the servant that brought the message; for he, observing the young lady's-maid carrying some bundles out a little suspiciously, thought there must be some scheme going on, and dogged a hackney-coach, in which Miss Morland went off, to the very house where it set her down.

Bel. Bring me to the servant instantly; but don't let a syllable of this matter reach my wife's ears, her spirits are already too much agitated.

[Exit.



*Spence.* Zounds! we shall be paid home for the tricks we have played in other families.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.—*Captain Savage's Lodgings.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Cap. S.* The vehemence of my resentment against this abandoned woman has certainly led me too far. I shouldn't have acquainted her with my discovery of her baseness; no, if I had acted properly, I should have concealed all knowledge of the transaction till the very moment of her guilt, and then burst upon her when she was solacing with her paramour in all the fullness of security. Now, if she should either alter her mind, with respect to going to the masquerade, or go in a different habit to elude my observation, I not only lose the opportunity of exposing her, but give her time to plan some plausible excuse for her infamous letter to Belville.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* General Savage and Mr. Torrington, sir.

*Cap. S.* You blockhead! why did you let them wait a moment? What can be the meaning of this visit?

[*Exit Ser.*]

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

*Gen.* I come, Horace, to talk to you about Miss Walsingham.

*Cap. S.* She's the most worthless woman existing, sir; I can convince you of it.

*Gen.* I have already changed my opinion of her.

*Cap. S.* What, you have found her out, sir?

*Tor.* Yes, he has made a trifling discovery.

*Gen.* 'Sdeath! don't make me contemptible to my own son.

(*Aside to Torrington.*)

*Cap.* But, sir, what instance of her precious behaviour has come to your knowledge? for an hour has scarcely elapsed since you thought her a miracle of goodness.

*Tor.* Ay, he has thought her a miracle of goodness within this quarter of an hour.

*Gen.* Why, she has a manner that would impose upon all the world.

*Cap. S.* Yes; but she has a manner also to undeceive the world thoroughly.

*Tor.* That we have found pretty recently. However, in this land of liberty, none are to be pronounced guilty till they are positively convicted; I can't, therefore, find against Miss Walsingham, upon the bare strength of presumptive evidence.

*Cap. S.* Presumptive evidence! Haven't I promised you ocular demonstration?

*Tor.* Ay; but till we receive this demonstration, my good friend, we cannot give judgment.

*Cap. S.* Then I'll tell you at once who is the object of her honourable affections.

*Gen.* Who—who?

*Cap. S.* What would you think if they were placed on Belville?

*Gen.* Upon Belville! Has she deserted to him from the corps of virtue?

*Cap. S.* Yes, she wrote to him, desiring to be taken from the masquerade to some convenient scene of privacy; and though I have seen the letter, she has the impudence to deny her own hand.

*Gen.* What a fiend, then, there is disguised under the uniform of an angel!

*Tor.* The delicate creature that was dying with confusion!

*Cap. S.* Only come with me to the masquerade, and you shall see Belville carry her off. 'Twas about the scandalous appointment with him I was speaking when you conceived I treated her rudely.

*Gen.* And you were only anxious to show her in her real character to me, when I was so exceedingly offended with you.

*Cap. S.* Nothing else in the world, sir. I knew you would despise and detest her the moment you were acquainted with her baseness.

*Gen.* How she brazened it out before my face, and what a regard she affected for your interest! I was a madman not to listen to your explanation.

*Tor.* Though you both talk of this point well, I still see nothing but strong presumption against Miss Walsingham. Mistakes have already happened, mistakes may happen again; and I will not give up a lady's honour, upon an evidence that would not cast a common pickpocket at the Old Bailey?

*Cap. S.* Come to the masquerade, and be satisfied.

*Gen.* Let us detach a party for dresses immediately. Yet remember, Torrington, that the punctuality of evidence which is necessary in a court of law, is by no means requisite in a court of honour.

*Tor.* Perhaps it would be more to the honour of your honourable courts if it were.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*An Apartment at Mrs. Crayons'.*

*Bel.* My dear, you must excuse me.

(*Behind.*)

*Ser.* Indeed, sir, you must not go up-stairs.

*Bel.* Indeed, but I will. The man is positive to the house, and I'll search every room in it, if I don't find the lady. James, don't stir from the street door.

*Enter* BELVILLE, followed by a female servant.

*Ser.* You are the strangest gentleman I ever met with in all my born days. I wish my mistress was at home.

*Bel.* I am a strange fellow, my dear; but if your mistress was at home, I should take the liberty of peeping into the apartments.

*Ser.* Sir, there's company in that room, you can't go in there.

*Bel.* Good manners, by your leave a little! (*Forcing the door.*) Whoever my gentleman is I'll call him to a severe reckoning; I have been just called to one myself, for making free with another man's sister.

Enter LEESON, followed by CONNOLLY.

*Lee.* Who is it that dares commit an outrage upon this apartment?

*Con.* An Englishman's very lodging—ay, and an Irishman's, too, I hope, is his castle! An Irishman is an Englishman all the world over.

*Bel.* Mr. Leeson!

*Ser.* Oh! we shall have murder.

*Con.* Run into that room, my dear, and stay with the young lady.

[Exit *Ser.*]

*Lee.* Connolly, let nobody else into that room.

*Con.* Let me alone for that, honey, if this gentleman have fifty people.

*Lee.* Whence is it, Mr. Belville, that you thus persecute me with injuries?

*Bel.* I am filled with astonishment!

*Con.* Faith, to speak the truth, you do look a little surprised.

*Ser.* Answer me, sir; what is the foundation of this new violence?

*Bel.* I am come, Mr. Leeson, upon an affair—

*Con.* The devil burn me, if he was half so much confounded, a while ago, when there was a naked sword at his breast.

*Bel.* I am come, Mr. Leeson, upon an affair, sir, that—how the devil shall I open it to him, since the tables are so fairly turned upon me!

[*Aside.*]

*Lee.* Despatch, sir; for I have company in the next room.

*Bel.* A lady, I suppose?

*Lee.* Suppose it is, sir?

*Bel.* And the lady's name is Moreland, isn't it, sir?

*Lee.* I can't see what business you have with her name, sir. You took away my sister, and I hope you have no designs upon the lady in the next room.

*Bel.* Indeed, but I have.

*Lee.* The devil you have!

*Con.* Well, this is the most unaccountable man I ever heard of; he'll have all the women in the town, I believe.

*Lee.* And, pray sir, what pretensions have you to the lady in the next room, even supposing her to be Miss Moreland?

*Bel.* No other pretensions than what a brother should have to the defence of his sister's honour; you thought yourself authorized to cut my throat, awhile ago, in a similar business.

*Lee.* And is Miss Moreland your sister?

*Bel.* Sir, there is insulence in that question; you know she is.

*Lee.* By heaven! I did not know it till this moment; but I rejoice at the discovery. This is blow for blow.

*Con.* Devil burn me, but they have fairly made a swop of it.

*Bel.* And you really didn't know that Miss Moreland was my sister?

*Lee.* I don't conceive myself under much necessity of apologizing to you, sir; but I am incapable of a dishonourable design upon any woman; and though Miss Moreland, in our short acquaintance, repeatedly mentioned her brother, she never once told me that his name was Belville.

*Con.* And he has had such few opportunities of being in her company, unless by letters, honey!

that he knew nothing more of her connections than her being a sweet, pretty creature, and having thirty thousand pounds.

*Bel.* The fortune, I dare say, no way lessened the force of her attractions.

*Lee.* I am above dissimulation, it really did not.

*Bel.* Well, Mr. Leeson, our families have shown such a very strong inclination to come together, that it would really be a pity to disappoint them.

*Con.* Upon my soul, and so it would; though the dread of being forced to have a husband, the young lady tells us, quickened her resolution to marry this gentleman.

*Bel.* Oh, she had no violence of that kind to apprehend from her family; therefore, Mr. Leeson, since you seem as necessary for the girl's happiness, as she seems for yours, you shall marry her here in town, with the consent of her friends, and save yourself the trouble of a journey to Scotland.

*Lee.* Can I believe you serious?

*Bel.* Zounds, Leeson! that air of surprise is a sad reproach! I didn't surprise you when I did a bad action, but I raise your astonishment when I do a good one.

*Con.* And, by my soul, Mr. Belville, if you knew how a good action becomes a man, you'd never do a bad one as long as you lived.

*Lee.* You have given me life and happiness in one day, Mr. Belville! However, it is now time you should see your sister. I know you'll be gentle with her, though you have so much reason to condemn her choice; and generously remember that her elopement proceeded from the great improbability there was of a beggar's ever meeting with the approbation of her family.

*Bel.* Don't apologize for your circumstances, Leeson; a princess could do no more than make you happy; and if you make her so, you meet her upon terms of the most perfect equality.

*Lee.* This is a new way of thinking, Mr. Belville.

*Bel.* 'Tis only an honest way of thinking; and I consider my sister a gainer upon the question; for a man of your merit is more difficult to be found than a woman of her fortune.

[*Exit.*]

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—A Dancing-room.

Enter BELVILLE.

*Bel.* Well, happiness is once more mine; and the women are all going in tip-top spirits to the masquerade. Now, Mr. Belville, let me have a few words with you. Miss Walsingham, the ripe, the luxurious Miss Walsingham, expects to find you there, burning with impatience. But, my dear friend, after the occurrences of the day, can you be weak enough to plunge into fresh crimes? Can you be base enough to abuse the goodness of that angel, your wife; and wicked enough not

only to destroy the innocence which is sheltered beneath your own roof, but to expose your family, perhaps, again to the danger of losing a son, a brother, a father, a husband? The possession of the three Graces is surely too poor a recompense for the folly you must commit, for the shame you must feel, and the consequences you must hazard. Upon my soul, if I struggle a little longer, I shall rise in my own opinion, and be less a rascal than I think myself—ay, but the object is bewitching; the matter will be an eternal secret; and if it be known that I sneak in this pitiful manner from a fine woman, when the whole elysium of her person solicits me. Well, and am I afraid the world should know that I have shrunk from an infamous action? A thousand blessings on you, dear conscience, for that one argument; I shall be an honest man after all. Suppose, however, that I give hex the meeting? That's dangerous; and I am so little accustomed to do what is right, that I shall certainly do what is wrong, the moment I am in the way of temptation. Come, Belville, your resolution is not so very slender a dependence, and you owe Miss Walsingham reparation for the injury which you have done her principles. I'll give her the meeting; I'll take her to the house I intended—Zounds! what a fool I have been all this time, to look for precarious satisfaction in vice, when there is such exquisite pleasure to be found at a certainty in virtue!

[Exit.

Enter LADY RACHEL and MRS. BELVILLE.

Lady R. For mirth's sake, don't let him see us. There has been a warm debate between his passion and his conscience.

Mrs. B. And the latter is the conqueror, my my life for it!

Lady R. Dear Mrs. Belville, you are the best of women, and ought to have the best of husbands.

Mrs. B. I have the best of husbands.

Lady R. I have not time to dispute the matter with you now; but I shall put you into my comedy, to teach wives that the best receipt for matrimonial happiness is to be deaf, dumb, and blind.

Mrs. B. Poh, poh! you are a satirist, Lady Rachel—But we are losing time. Shouldn't we put on our dresses, and prepare for the grand scene?

Lady R. Don't you tremble at the trial?

Mrs. B. Not in the least; I am sure my heart has no occasion.

Lady R. Have you let Miss Walsingham into our little plot?

Mrs. B. You know she could not be insensible of Mr. Belville's design upon herself; and it is no farther than that design we have anything to carry into execution.

Lady R. Well, she may serve to facilitate the matter; and, therefore, I am not sorry that you have trusted her.

Mrs. B. We shall be too late, and then what signifies all your fine plotting?

Lady R. Is it not a little pang of jealousy that would fain now quicken our motions?

Mrs. B. No, Lady Rachel, it is a certainty of my husband's love and generosity that makes me wish to come to the trial. I would not exchange my confidence in his affections for all the mines of Peru; so nothing you can say will make me miserable.

Lady R. You are a most unaccountable woman; so away with you.

[Exit.

SCENE II.—The Same.

Enter SPRUCE and GHASTLY.

Spruce. Why, Ghistly, the old general, your master, is a greater fool than I ever thought he was. He wants to marry Miss Walsingham!

Ghist. Mrs. Tempest suspected that there was something going forward by all his higger-mugger consulting with Mr. Torrington, and so set me on to listen.

Spruce. She's a good friend of yours; and that thing she made the general give you the other day in the hospital is, I suppose, a snug hundred a-year.

Ghist. Better than two; I wash for nearly four thousand people. There was a major's horse who put in for it, and pleaded a large family—

Spruce. With long services, I suppose.

Ghist. Yes; but Mrs. Tempest insisted upon my long services. So the major was set aside. However, to keep the thing from the newspapers, I fancy he will succeed the barber who died last night, poor woman, of a lying-in fever, after being brought to bed of three children. Places in public institutions—

Spruce. Are often sweetly disposed of. I think of asking Belville for something, one of these days.

Ghist. He has great interest.

Spruce. I might be a justice of peace, if I pleased, and in a shabby neighbourhood, where the mere swearing would bring in something tolerable; but there are so many strange people let into the commission now-a-days, that I shouldn't like to have my name in the list.

Ghist. You are right.

Spruce. No, no; I leave that to paltry tradesmen, and shall think of some little sinecure, or a small pension on the Irish establishment.

Ghist. Well, success attend you. I must hobble home as fast as I can, to know if Mrs. Tempest has any orders. Oh! there's a rare storm brewing for our old goat of a general.

Spruce. When shall we crack a bottle together?

Ghist. Oh! I sha'n't touch a glass of claret these three weeks; for last night I gave nature a little fillip with a drunken bout according to the doctor's directions; I have entirely left off bread, and I am in great hopes that I shall get rid of my gout by these means, especially if I can learn to eat my meat quite raw like a cannibal.

Spruce. Ha, ha, ha!

Ghist. Look at me, Spruce, I was once as likely

a young fellow as any underground in the whole parish of St. James's; but waiting on the general so many years—

*Spruce.* Ay; and following his example, ghostly.

*Ghost.* 'Tis too true,—has reduced me to what you see. These miserable spindles would do very well for a lord or a duke, *Spruce*; but they are a sad disgrace to a poor valet-de-chambre.

*Spruce.* Well, I don't believe there's a gentleman's gentleman within the weekly bills who joins a prudent solicitude for the main-chance, to a strict care of his constitution, better than myself. I have a little girl who stands me in about three guineas a week; I never bet more than a pound upon a rubber of whist; I always sleep with my head very warm; and swallow a new-laid egg every morning with my chocolate.

## SCENE III.—A Street.

Two Sedan Chairs cross the Stage, and set down BELVILLE and a Lady at the Door of a House.

*Bel.* This way, my dear creature.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, and TORRINGTON.

*Cap. S.* There—they they go in. You see the place is quite convenient, not twenty yards from the masquerade.

*Gen.* How closely the fellow sticks to her!

*Tor.* Like the great seal to the peerage patent of a chancellor. But, gentlemen, we have still no more than proof presumptive. Where is the ocular demonstration which we were to have?

*Cap. S.* I'll swear to the blue domino; 'tis a very remarkable one, and so is Belville's.

*Tor.* You would have rare custom among the Newgate solicitors if you'd venture an oath upon the identity of the party under it.

*Gen.* 'Tis the very size and shape of Miss Walsingham.

*Tor.* And yet I have a strange notion that there is a trifling *alibi* in this case.

*Gen.* It would be a d—d affair if we should be outerminded.

*Cap. S.* Oh! follow me; here's the door left luckily open, and I'll soon clear up the matter beyond a question.

[*Exit into the house.*]

*Tor.* Why, your son is not mad, general. This must produce a deadly breach with Belville. For heaven's sake, let's go in and prevent any excesses of his rashness.

*Gen.* By all means, or the poor fellow's generous anxiety on my account may be productive of very fatal consequences.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV.—An Apartment.

BELVILLE discovered, unmasked, and a Lady in a Blue Domino, masked.

*Bel.* My dear Miss Walsingham, we are now perfectly safe; yet I will by no means entreat you to unmask, because I am convinced, from the propriety with which you repulsed my addresses this morning, that you intended the present interview should make me still more deeply sensible of my presumption. I never lied so awkwardly in all my life; if it were to make her comply I should be at no loss for language. (*Aside.*) The situation in which I must appear before you, madam, is certainly a very humiliating one; but I am persuaded that your generosity will be gratified to hear that I have bid an everlasting adieu to my profligacy, and I am now only alive to the virtues of Mrs. Belville's. She won't speak. I don't wonder at it, for brazen as I am myself, if I met with so mortifying a rejection, I should be cursedly out of countenance.

(*Aside.*)

*Cap. (Within.)* I will go in.

*Gen. (Within.)* I command you to desist.

*Tor. (Within.)* This will be an affair for the Old Bailey.

*Bel.* Why, what the devil is all this? Don't be alarmed, Miss Walsingham; be assured I'll protect you at the hazard of my life; step into this closet—you sha'n't be discovered, depend upon it. (*She goes in.*) And now to discover the cause of confusion.

(*Unlocks the door.*)

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, and TORRINGTON.

*Bel.* Savage! What is the meaning of this strange behaviour?

*Cap. S.* Where is Miss Walsingham?

*Bel.* So, then, sir, this is a premeditated scheme, for which I am obliged to your friendship.

*Cap. S.* Where is Miss Walsingham, sir?

*Gen.* Dear Belville, he is out of his senses; this stor n was entirely against my orders.

*Tor.* If he proceeds much longer in these vagaries, we must amuse him with a commission of lunacy.

*Bel.* This is neither a time nor a place for argument, Mr. Torrington; but as you and the general seem to be in possession of your senses, I shall be glad if you'll take this very friendly gentleman away; and depend upon it, I sha'n't die in his debt for the present obligation.

*Cap. S.* And depend upon it, sir, pay the obligation when you will, I sha'n't stir till I see

Miss Walsingham. Lookye, Belville; there are secret reasons for my behaving in this manner; reasons which you yourself will approve when you know them; my father here—

Gen. Disavows your conduct in every particular, and would rejoice to see you at the halberds.

Tor. And, for my part, I told him previously 'twas a downright burglary.

Bel. Well, gentlemen, let your different motives for breaking in upon me in this agreeable manner be what they may, I don't see that I am less annoyed by my friends than my enemy. I must, therefore, again request that you will all walk downstairs.

Cap. S. I will first walk into this room.

Bel. Really, I think you will not.

Gen. What frenzy possesses the fellow to urge this matter further?

Cap. S. While there's a single doubt, she triumphs over justice. (Drawing.) I will go into that room.

Bel. Then you must make your way through me.

Enter MRS. BELVILLE from the room.

Mrs. B. Ah!

Cap. S. There, I knew she was in the room; there's the blue domino.

Gen. Put up your sword, if you don't desire to be cashiered from my favour for ever.

Bel. Why would you come out, madam? But you have nothing to apprehend.

Cap. S. Pray, madam, will you have the goodness to unmask?

Bel. She sha'n't unmask.

Cap. S. I say she shall.

Bel. I say she shall not.

Mrs. B. Pray, let me oblige the gentleman.

(Unmasks.)

Cap. S. Death and destruction! Here's a discovery!

Gen. and Tor. Mrs. Belville!

Mrs. B. Yes, Mrs. Belville, gentlemen. Is conjugal fidelity so very terrible a thing now-a-days, but a man is to suffer death for being found in company with his own wife?

Bel. My love, this is a surprise, indeed; but it is a most agreeable one; since you find me really ashamed of my former follies, and cannot now doubt the sincerity of my reformation.

Mrs. B. I am too happy! This single moment would overpay a whole life of anxiety.

Bel. Where shall I attend you? Will you return to the masquerade?

Mrs. B. Oh, no. Lady Rachel and Miss Walsingham are, by this time, at our house, with Mr. Leeson and the Irish gentleman whom you pressed into our party, impatiently expecting the result of this adventure.

Bel. Give me leave to conduct you home, then, from this scene of confusion. To-morrow, Captain Savage, I shall beg the favour of your explanation. (Aside to Cap. S.) Kind gentlemen, your most humble servant.

Mrs. B. And when you next disturb a tete-a-tete,

for pity to a poor wife don't let it be so very uncustomary a party as the matrimonial one.

[Exit with Bel.]

Gen. (To Cap. S.) So, sir, you have led us upon a blessed expedition here.

Tor. Now, don't you think that if your courts of honour, like our courts of law, searched a little minutely into evidence, it would be equally to the credit of their understandings?

Cap. S. Though I am covered with confusion at my mistake (for, you see, Belville was mistaken as well as myself,) I am overjoyed at this discovery of Miss Walsingham's innocence.

Gen. I should exult in it, too, with a *jeu de joie*, if it didn't now show the impossibility of her ever being Mrs. Savage.

Cap. S. Dear sir, why should you think that an impossibility? Though some mistakes have occurred in consequence, I suppose, of Mrs. Belville's little plot upon her husband, I dare say Miss Walsingham may yet be prevailed upon to come into our family.

Tor. Take care of a new error in your proceedings, young gentleman.

Gen. Ay, another defeat would make us completely despicable.

Cap. S. Sir, I'll forfeit my life if she does not consent to marry this very night.

Gen. Only bring this matter to bear, and I'll forgive you everything.

Tor. The captain should be informed, I think, general, that she declined it peremptorily this evening.

Gen. Ay; do you hear that, Horace?

Cap. S. I am not at all surprised at it, considering the general misconception we laboured under. But I'll immediately to Belville's, explain the whole mystery, and conclude everything to your satisfaction.

[Exit]

Gen. So, Torrington, we shall be able to take the field again, you see.

Tor. But how, in the name of wonder, has your son found out your intention of marrying Miss Walsingham? I looked upon myself as the only person acquainted with the secret.

Gen. That thought has marched itself two or three times to my own recollection. For, though I gave him some distant hints of the affair, I took particular care to keep behind the works of a proper circumspection.

Tor. Oh! if you gave him any hints at all, I am not surprised at his discovering everything.

Gen. I shall be all impatience till I hear of his interview with Miss Walsingham. Suppose, my dear friend, we went to Belville's, 'tis but in the next street, and we shall be there in the lighting of a match.

Tor. Really, this is a pretty business for a man of my age and profession; trot here, trot there. But, as I have been weak enough to make myself a kind of party in the cause, I own that I have curiosity enough to be anxious about the determination.

Gen. Come along, my old boy; and remember the song, "Servile spirits," &c.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE V.—Belville's.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE and MISS WALSINGHAM.

Cap. S. Nay, but, my dearest Miss Walsingham, the extenuation of my own conduct to Belville made it absolutely necessary for me to discover my engagements with you; and, as happiness is now so fortunately in our reach, I flatter myself you will be prevailed upon to forgive an error which proceeded only from an extravagance of love.

Miss W. To think me capable of such an action, Captain Savage! I am terrified at the idea of a union with you, and it is better for a woman at any time to sacrifice an insolent lover than to accept of a suspicious husband.

Cap. S. In the happiest unions, my dearest creature, there must be always something to overlook on both sides.

Miss W. Very civil, truly.

Cap. S. Pardon me, my life, for this frankness; and recollect, that if the lover has, through misconception, been unhappily guilty, he brings a husband altogether reformed to your hands.

Miss W. Well, I see I must forgive you at last, so I may as well make a merit of necessity, you provoking creature.

Cap. S. And may I hope, indeed, for the blessing of this hand?

Miss W. Why, you wretch, would you have me force it upon you? I think, after what I have said, a soldier might have ventured to take it without further ceremony.

Cap. S. Angelic creature! thus I seize it as my lawful prize.

Miss W. Well, but now you have obtained this inestimable prize, captain, give me again leave to ask if you have had a certain explanation with the general?

Cap. S. How can you doubt it?

Miss W. And he is really impatient for our marriage?

Cap. S. 'Tis incredible how earnest he is.

Miss W. What, did he tell you of his interview with me this evening, when he brought Mr. Torrington?

Cap. S. He did.

Miss W. Oh! then, I can have no doubt.

Cap. S. If a shadow of doubt remains, here he comes to remove it. Joy, my dear sir! joy, a thousand times!

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

Gen. What, my dear boy, have you carried the day?

Miss W. I have been weak enough to indulge him with a victory, indeed, general.

Gen. (Sings.) "None but the brave, none but the brave," &c.

Tor. I congratulate you heartily on this decree, general.

Gen. This had nearly proved a day of disappointment; but the stars have fortunately turned

it in my favour, and now I reap the rich reward of my victory.

(Salutes her.)

Cap. S. And here I take her from you, as the greatest good which heaven can send me.

Miss W. Oh, captain!

Gen. You take her as the greatest good which heaven can send you, sirrah? I take her as the greatest good which heaven can send me; and now what have you to say to her?

Miss W. General Savage!

Tor. Here will be a fresh injunction to stop proceedings.

Miss W. Are we never to have done with these mistakes?

Gen. What mistakes can have happened now, my sweetest? You delivered up your dear hand to me this moment.

Miss W. True, sir; but I thought you were going to bestow my dear hand upon this dear gentleman.

Gen. How! that dear gentleman!

Cap. S. I am thunderstruck!

Tor. General—(Sings.) "None but the brave," &c.

Gen. So the covert way is cleared at last; and you have imagined that I was all along negotiating for this fellow when I was gravely soliciting for myself.

Miss W. No other idea sir, ever once entered my imagination.

Tor. General—(Sings.) "Noble minds should ne'er despair," &c.

Gen. Zounds! here's all the company pouring upon us in full gallop, and I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town.

Enter MR. and MRS. BELVILLE, LADY RACHEL, LEESON, and CONNOLLY.

Bel. Well, general, we have left you a long time together. Shall I give you joy?

Gen. No; wish me demolished in the fortifications of Dunkirk.

Mrs. B. What's the matter?

Lady R. The general appears disconcerted.

Lee. The gentleman looks as if he had fought a hard battle.

Con. Ay, and gained nothing but a defeat, my dear.

Tor. I'll show cause for his behaviour.

Gen. Death and d—n! Not for the world. I am taken by surprise here; let me consider a moment how to cut my way through the enemy.

Miss W. How could you be deceived in this manner.

(To Capt. S.)

Lady R. Oh, Mr. Torrington, we are much obliged to you; you have been in town ever since last night, and only see us now by accident.

Tor. I have been very busy, madam; but you look sadly, very sadly, indeed; your old disorder, the jaundice, I suppose, has been very troublesome to you?

Lady R. Sir; you have a very extraordinary mode of complimenting your acquaintance.

Con. I don't believe, for all that, that there's a word of a lie in the truth he speaks.

(Aside.)

Mrs. B. Miss Walsingham, Captain Savage, has been telling Mr. Belville and me of a very extraordinary mistake.

Miss W. 'Tis very strange, indeed, mistake on mistake.

Bel. 'Tis no way strange to find everybody properly struck with the merit of Miss Walsingham.

Miss W. A compliment from you, now, Mr. Belville, is really worth accepting.

Gen. If I thought the affair could be kept a secret, by making the town over to my son, since I am utterly shut out myself.

Cap. S. He seems exceedingly embarrassed.

Gen. If I thought that, why, mortified as I must be in giving it up, I think I could resolve upon the manoeuvre to save myself from universal ridicule; but it can't be—it can't be; and I only double my disappointment in rewarding the disobedience of the rascal who has supplanted me. There! there! they are talking of it, all laughing at me, and I shall run mad!

Mrs. T. (Without.) I say, you feather-headed puppy! he is in this house; my own servant saw him come in, and I will not stir till I find him.

Gen. She here! Then deliberation is over, and I am entirely blown up.

Lady R. I'll take notes of this affair.

Enter MRS. TEMPEST.

Mrs. T. Mighty well, sir. So you are in love, it seems; and you want to be married, it seems?

Lec. My blessed aunt! Oh, how proud I am of the relation!

Gen. Dear Bab, give me quarter before all this company.

Mrs. T. You are in love, you old fool, are you? And you want to marry Miss Walsingham, indeed!

Con. I never heard a pleasanter-spoken gentlewoman. Oh, honey, if I had the taming of her, she should never be abusive, without keeping a civil tongue in her head.

Mrs. T. Well, sir, and when is the happy day to be fixed?

Bel. What the devil, is this true, general?

Gen. True; can you believe such an absurdity?

Mrs. T. Why, will you deny, you miserable old mummy, that you made proposal of marriage to her?

Gen. Yes, I do—no, I don't—proposals of marriage!

Miss W. In favour of your son. I'll help him out a little.

(Aside.)

Gen. Yes, in favour of my son. What the devil shall I do?

(Aside.)

Mrs. B. Shall I take a lesson from this lady, Mr. Belville? Perhaps, if the women of virtue were to pluck up a little spirit, they might be soon as well treated as kept mistresses.

Mrs. T. Harkye, General Savage, I believe you assert a falsehood; but if you speak the truth, give your son this moment to Miss Walsingham, and let me be fairly rid of my rival.

Gen. My son, Miss Walsingham! Miss Walsingham, my son!

Bel. It will do, Horace, it will do.

Mrs. T. No prevarications, General Savage; do what I bid you instantly, or by all the wrongs of an enraged woman, I'll so expose you.

Con. What a fine fellow this is, to have the command of an army!

Gen. If Miss Walsingham can be prevailed upon.

Tor. Oh! she'll oblige you readily. But you must settle a good fortune upon your son.

Mrs. T. That he shall do.

Mrs. B. Miss Walsingham, my dear—

Miss W. I can refuse nothing, either to your request, or to the request of the general.

Gen. Oblige me with your hand, then, madam. Come here, you—come here, captain. There, there is Miss Walsingham's hand for you.

Con. And as pretty a little fist it is as any in the three kingdoms.

Gen. Torrington shall settle the fortune.

Lec. I give you joy most heartily, madam.

Bel. We all give her joy.

Cap. S. Mine is beyond the power of expression.

Miss W. (Aside to the company.) And so is the general's, I believe.

Con. Oh! 'faith! that may be easily seen by the sweetness of his countenance.

Tor. Well, the cause being now at last determined, I think we may retire from the court.

Gen. And without any great credit, I fear, to the general.

Con. By my soul, you may say that.

Mrs. T. Do you murmur, sir? Come this moment home with me.

Gen. I'll go anywhere to hide this miserable head of mine. What a d—d campaign have I made of it!

[Exit Gen. and Mrs. T.]

Con. Upon my soul, if I was in the general's place, I'd divide the house with this devil; I'd keep within doors myself, and make her take the outside.

Bel. The day has been a lousy one, thanks to the communicative disposition of the captain.

Mrs. B. And the evening should be cheerful.

Bel. I sha'n't, therefore, part with one of you, 'till we have had a hearty laugh at our adventures.

Miss W. They have been very whimsical, indeed; yet, if represented on the stage, I hope they would be found not only entertaining, but instructive.

Lady R. Instructive! Why, the modern critics say, that the only business of Comedy is to make people laugh.

Bel. That is degrading the dignity of letters exceedingly, as well as lessening the utility of

the stage. A good comedy is a capital effort of genius, and should, therefore, be directed to the noblest purposes.

Miss W. Very true; and unless we learn some-

thing while we chuckle, the carpenter who nails a pantomime together will be entitled to more applause than the best comic poet in the kingdom.

[*Exeunt.*]



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